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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Blah, Blah, Blogs

BY AN LIZZA, CHRISTINE ROSEN

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

JUNE 26, 2006 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,771 VOLUME 234

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THE
NEW REPUBLIC

Updated daily. On the Web at www.tnr.com.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY John Hersey

CORRESPONDENCE

SAVING DARFUR

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEMAND FOR U.S. action in response to the genocide in Darfur ("Again," May 15). During the Clinton administration, our nation's leaders refused to call the slaughter in Rwanda by its true name, and, as a result, an estimated 800,000 innocent people lost their lives. The only difference between Rwanda and Darfur is that, today, hundreds of thousands are killed while members of the Bush administration pat themselves on the back for giving the murder its proper label. The sad reality is that using the word genocide—and then refusing to intervene militarily to protect lives—has actually done more harm to the people of Darfur and to emerging international protection mandates than doing nothing at all.

ELISABETH KIDDER
Charlottesville, Virginia

SURE, *THE NEW REPUBLIC* supports a military intervention to stop the Sudanese genocide now, in the abstract. But say that the intervention takes place, winning a rapid military victory but then struggling through an ongoing occupation. Over the next three or four years, several thousand U.S. troops die, and thousands more are injured. The genocide is halted and the people of Sudan hold a popular vote, but they have difficulty forming a government as sectarian guerrilla violence continues. Costs mount. A handful of U.S. troops act brutally toward prisoners or civilians.

At that point, following its pattern over the course of the Iraq war, TNR will simply berate and criticize those who carried out the intervention—especially if they are Republicans. Are you actually prepared for the unpleasant realities of foreign intervention this time around?

TIMOTHY TAYLOR
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

YOUR ONGOING COVERAGE OF Darfur has been thorough and impassioned, but those in power still have done nothing. Here's a novel solution. With the United States leading the international community in pity and self-flagellation (yes, also material assis-

Never again? What nonsense. Again and again is more like it. In Darfur, we are witnessing a genocide again, and again we are witnessing ourselves witnessing it and doing nothing to stop it. Even people who wish to know about the problem do not wish to know about the solution. They prefer the raising of consciousnesses to the raising of troops. Just as Rwanda made a bleak mockery of the lessons of Bosnia, Darfur is making a bleak mockery of the lessons of Rwanda. Some lessons, it seems, are gladly and regularly unlearned. Except, of course, by the perpetrators of this evil, who learn the only really enduring lessons about genocide in our time: that the Western response to it is late in coming, or is not coming at all.

tance, however inadequate), it might be time to look to the Germans—today's New Europe leaders—who, last century, made the word "genocide" the shibboleth to hell. Who knows? Perhaps the revival of the Afrika Korps would represent a final—and finally appropriate—act of atonement for the Final Solution? As American leadership has proved itself inhumane, it is Europe that now must "never forget."

JOSHUA COHEN
Brooklyn, New York

THE NEW REPUBLIC HAS ARGUED for U.S. military intervention to stop the genocide in Darfur. But, when the coffins of American soldiers return from Darfur, how will TNR receive them? Will the editors explain to grieving families why their beloved had to die for Darfur? When a grief-stricken mother demands a personal justification from the president for her child's death in Darfur, will TNR stand with George W. Bush? Will the editors continue to support the U.S. military in Darfur as the mission drags on and the casualties continue to mount? There are no weapons of mass destruction in Darfur, and Sudan pre-

sents no threat to the United States. If TNR wants to argue that the United States should risk the lives of its citizens in Darfur on purely humanitarian grounds—completely divorced from any considerations of national security or national interest—then I look forward to approval for ending the civil war in Congo, et cetera.

MICHAEL R. HEYDENBURG
Jersey City, New Jersey

THE DECISION TO PUBLISH AN ISSUE devoted to the genocide in Darfur is reminiscent of a similar step that *THE NEW REPUBLIC* took during the Holocaust. In August 1943, at a time when much of the U.S. press was ignoring or downplaying news of the mass murder of Europe's Jews, TNR published a special 20-page supplement titled "THE JEWS OF EUROPE: HOW TO HELP THEM." That emphasis on practical steps echoes your argument regarding Darfur: "There is no point in caring about a problem unless you care about its solution." The moral obligation of bystanders was a central focus of the magazine's concerns then, as it is today—and even the language is similar. For example, a February 1943 editorial argued that, if the Allies remained indifferent to the Nazi genocide, "[T]hey will make themselves, morally, partners in Hitler's unspeakable crimes." Similarly, your editorial about Darfur warned that "the only acceptable response is an immediate and uncompromising response or else we, too, will be complicit in the crime."

Advocates of rescuing European Jewry greeted the 1943 supplement with enthusiasm. The Yiddish-language *Morgen Zhurnal* declared, "It should be in the hands of every Jew and should also be spread throughout the Christian world." Jewish organizations and others purchased more than 40,000 copies of the supplement within the first week of its publication. That issue was the

continued on page 33.

THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 234, Number 24, Issue 4,771, June 26, 2006. (Printed in the United States on June 15, 2006.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated March 20 & 27, June 5 & 12, July 10 & 17, August 14 & 21, September 11 & 18, and November 27 & December 4, 2006) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Grant Loomis at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 459-8447. Yearly subscriptions: \$79.97; foreign, \$119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, \$99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$8.00 domestic and \$10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2006 by The New Republic, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383; indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest, For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone: (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: letters@tnr.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 527-1595 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

The Big Lie (II)

What about those Arab "refugees"?

In a previous installment of this series of *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, we discussed The Big Lie (I), namely that Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") are occupied territories. This has been repeated so long and so often that most of the world has come to believe it. The Big Lie (II) is that of the Arab refugees. They deserve a closer look.

What are the facts?

The legitimacy of Israel. The state of Israel was legally created out of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. The area was desolate – desert and swamp – with some small towns and a few inhabitants, many of them nomads. The inhabitants, if they thought about it at all, considered themselves Syrians. The legitimacy of Israel arises from the Balfour Declaration issued by the British, who were given the mandate over the area by the League of Nations. Jews have lived in the country since Biblical times. The Arabs from the surrounding areas were lured to "Palestine" by the industry and prosperity that the Jews brought to the region. Envy, hatred, and religious fanaticism turned the Arabs against the Jews. In bloody outrages, horrible massacres, killings and rapes, the Arabs tried to dislodge the Jews, but were unable to do so.

In 1947, the British, having tired of the trouble and the bloodshed, resigned their mandate. That same year, the United Nations mandated partitioning of the territory. The Jews, though disappointed, accepted the partition. The Arabs rejected it out of hand and launched war against Israel. The armies of five Arab countries invaded the nascent state. Following the exhortations of the invaders, the Arab residents got out of the way hoping to return after victory was attained. They could then reclaim their property and that of the Jews, all of whom would have been killed or would have fled. That and that alone is the source of the Arab "refugee problem."

Had the Arabs accepted the UN partition plan, there would now have been a state of "Palestine" for the last 58 years. They might have attained a similar level of prosperity, advancement, and development as Israel, which, small though it is, is today in almost every regard one of the world's most advanced countries.

Not the only refugees. There is dispute about the number of those refugees. Best estimates are that about 650,000 people fled. But those Arabs are not the only refugees of the 1948 war

The problem of the "Palestinian refugees" is a red herring, fostered for almost sixty years in order to maintain the fiction that these "refugees" have the right to return to their "homeland." The original 650,000 have now miraculously swelled to 4 or 5 million. It is clear that, were they allowed to "return" to Israel, the country would cease to exist as a Jewish state. Since the "return of the refugees" is one of several non-negotiable Arab demands, and since Israel is obviously unwilling to accept them, the Arab/Israeli conflict would seem to be beyond resolution. Israel is not likely to succumb to Big Lie (II) and will not commit demographic suicide by letting the Arab "refugees" into their country.

of Israel's independence. About 800,000 Jews from Arab countries – from Morocco and Algeria to Iraq and Yemen – fled or were driven out of their home countries, where they had lived for centuries. Most of them left with just the clothes on their backs, leaving land, property, businesses, and wealth created over generations. Most fled to the newly-born Jewish state. They were received with open arms, immediately and fully integrated into Israeli society. They now form about 50 per cent of the population of Israel.

Not so with the Arab refugees. Their Arab brethren refused to integrate them into their countries and into their societies, but confined them in so-called "refugee camps," essentially extended slums, where they or rather their descendants – now the fourth generation – have been living ever since. The reason for the refusal to integrate them into their Arab host countries has been the design to keep them as a festering sore and to make solution of the Arab/Israeli conflict impossible. These "refugees" are seething with hatred toward Israel and provide the cadres of suicide bombers.

The Palestinian refugees occupy a unique place in the annals of warfare and migration of people. Such migrations are common and unavoidable in the long history of human conflict. Following WW II, millions of Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia and the eastern regions of Germany that were turned over to Poland. In the upheavals that followed the withdrawal of the British from the Indian subcontinent, millions fled or were driven from their homes. Following France's loss of its Algerian possessions, hundreds of thousands fled that North African country. These millions of refugees and others were absorbed into their new countries and were no longer the concern of the world. It is only the Palestinians who, for almost sixty years, have been considered "refugees." In fact, a special branch of the United Nations (UNWRA) exists only for the maintenance of these "refugees," at a cost of billions of dollars.

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Good Old Boy II

LAST WEEK, I ADDRESSED THE intellectual and moral case against Clintonism: that it lacked principle and accomplished little. But, among activist liberals today, that intellectual and moral critique is inseparable from a political one: that Bill Clinton destroyed the Democratic Party. Constructing a Democratic majority, critics like blogger Markos Moulitsas and author Thomas Frank allege, does not require building on the Clinton legacy; it requires escaping it.

The argument starts by noting that Clinton never won a majority of the vote. But the statistic is less damning than the critics assume. In three- or four-way presidential elections, the winner rarely cracks 50 percent. Woodrow Wilson failed to do so twice; so did Harry Truman in 1948 and Richard Nixon in 1968. In 1980, with John Anderson running as an Independent, Ronald Reagan squeaked by with 50.75 percent. Measured in electoral votes (which often factor out third-party candidates because they don't win a plurality in any state), Clinton's victories look impressive. He won 370 electoral votes in 1992 and 379 in 1996—more than Wilson in 1916, Truman in 1948, John F. Kennedy in 1960, Nixon in 1968, Jimmy Carter in 1976, or George W. Bush in 2000 or 2004.

Some critics acknowledge that Clinton was personally popular, but attribute it to his freakish political skill. *Clintonism*, they insist, was not—and thus cannot be the basis for a Democratic revival. But the truth is closer to the reverse. As early as 1992, when revelations about Gennifer Flowers and draft-dodging nearly derailed his primary bid, Americans had huge doubts about Clinton's character. But they divorced those qualms from their assessment of Clinton's policies—which they grew to love. By December 1998, after the Monica Lewinsky scandal hit, a majority of Americans disliked Clinton personally, but over 70 percent liked what he was doing for the country. Today's activists blame Clintonism for leaving grassroots Democrats demoralized. But the demoralization began after Clinton left office. According to the Pew Research Center, 63 percent of Democrats said their party was doing a good job standing up for its core beliefs in 2000—compared with only 33 percent by the end of 2004.

How, then, do you account for the great

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

electoral disaster of Clinton's tenure: the 1994 Republican takeover of Congress? The answer is something that Clinton's critics generally ignore: history. For more than a half-century, Democratic strength in Congress had been anchored by the party's dominance in the South. At the presidential level, Dixie began deserting the party as early as 1964. But, in Congress—where incumbents rarely lose—the transformation lagged far behind. As late as 1988, Democrats still controlled roughly two-thirds of the region's House and Senate seats. But it couldn't last. "Eventually, the massive political realignment at the top of the ticket," warned party strategists Bill Galston and Elaine Kamarck in 1989, "will affect races at the bottom of the ticket."

"Eventually" came in 1994, sparked by a wave of retirements and race-based redistricting that created new black districts and left white ones whiter. Did Clinton exacerbate the problem? Sure. The assault-weapons ban, gays in the military, the health care push, and the 1993 tax hike fueled Republican turnout, while NAFTA kept some labor voters from the polls. But, while Clinton accentuated and hastened the change, it would probably have happened anyway. To keep Congress, Democrats needed the South, and, given the ideological distance—especially on cultural issues—between the white South and the national Democratic Party, the hammer was bound to fall.

And it wasn't just the South. For more than two decades prior to Clinton's election, the national Democratic Party had been in decline. Clinton's liberal detractors blame him for not creating a Democratic majority. But partisan majorities take decades to build, and Clinton took the critical first step: He smashed the existing, *Republican* majority that had taken shape under Ronald Reagan. (In this way, he was like Richard Nixon, who smashed a preexisting Democratic majority but

didn't create a Republican one in its place.) The Reagan majority was based on three things: militant anti-communism, public suspicion of government, and the divide between blacks and the white working class. Mikhail Gorbachev took care of the first, but Clinton overcame the others. The percentage of Americans identifying as Democrats, which dropped like a stone in the '70s and '80s, hit bottom in the early '90s, and the spread versus the GOP inched up. Even more importantly, public perceptions of government, which had also been in freefall since the mid-'80s, began to improve—which is logical, given that government policies were markedly improving the lives of average Americans, particularly the poor.

Clinton's liberal critics savage him for gobbling up big money contributions rather than developing a small donor base (something Democrats began doing in the '80s). And they are right that, in the long term, a small donor base is critical to a Democratic majority. But the emergence of that base since 2004 owes largely to factors that did not exist in the '90s—campaign finance reform, liberal rage over Bush and Iraq, and, above all, the Internet. Organizationally, Clinton could have done more to hasten its rise. But, ideologically, he did something even more important: He convinced blue-collar whites—who had grown cynical about government—that it could improve their lives.

In 1992 and 1996, Clinton did something no national Democrat had done in decades: He won the white working class. And, by restoring the public's faith in government, he laid the ideological (if not the organizational) foundation for a Democratic majority. That emerging majority was derailed by two things. First, the Lewinsky scandal, which made character a dominant issue in the 2000 presidential race and sliced Al Gore's popular-vote victory so thin that the election ended in the Supreme Court. And second, September 11, which gave Bush a Republican Congress and a second term.

But, with those two factors receding, the Democratic Party's prospects once again look bright. The party's new "net-roots" base deserves some credit for that. But, even more importantly, Americans are turning to the Democratic Party because, under Bush, they have seen government fail, and *they remember a time when it worked—under Bill Clinton*. Liberal activists should remember as well.

PETER BEINART

Open Net

IMAGINE YOU WERE choosing whether to buy a book from Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble's website, and you knew that Amazon's site would load much faster, allowing you to scan books and sample their content much more easily. Or imagine that Fox.com's streaming video came up instantly and CNN.com's balked. Or that whitehouse.gov loaded quickly while the site of a contentious political magazine was plagued by delays. That is what your Internet experience could be like if Congress doesn't require

the big cable and telephone companies that control access to the Web to observe what is called "net neutrality."

Under the original rules put in place in 1934, telecommunications companies can't give preferential treatment to one set of outgoing calls over another by, say, offering static-free calling to one company's telemarketers but not another's. The same rules initially applied to the Internet. Telecom companies couldn't charge website proprietors to have their content sent to consumers more expeditiously. But, last August, George W. Bush's Federal Communications Commission (FCC) exempted telecoms that provide Internet connections from these restrictions, dealing a blow to both entrepreneurship and political discourse.

Content providers from Google and Amazon to *Daily Kos* and *TNR Online* currently pay Web-hosting companies to put their content on the Internet. Consumers then access that content via Internet service providers, such as Comcast and Verizon. Under the new FCC guidelines, those companies will be able to charge content providers a fee to deliver their content to consumers and, in particular, an additional surcharge to deliver their content to consumers more quickly—that is, they will be able to create a faster toll lane on the information superhighway. If they

want, the telecoms can favor their own services and penalize competitors—for instance, voice over Internet protocol companies like Vonage—by denying them faster service. They can even charge lucrative fees to companies for exclusive access to the fast lane at the expense of their competitors, giving, for example, L.L. Bean an advantage over Lands' End. And, by making the fast lane prohibitively expensive, they can force start-up ventures and noncommercial providers (like blogs) onto the bumpy dirt roads of the Internet.

Net neutrality would prohibit all of this. Telecoms could make money the way they always have—by charging homes and businesses for an Internet connection—but they couldn't make money from the content providers themselves. That is a perfectly reasonable proposition, and it has won support from Amazon and eBay, as well as the Christian Coalition and MoveOn.org. But the big cable and phone companies, backed by the Competitive Enterprise Institute, Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform, and a host of well-heeled lobbyists—including former Clinton Press Secretary Mike McCurry—have adamantly resisted net neutrality. Last

week, they defeated a House measure, sponsored by Representative Ed Markey, to bar discrimination on the Internet. The battle now moves to the Senate, where Olympia Snowe and Byron Dorgan are putting forward a similar proposal.

Opponents of net neutrality claim that telecoms need the extra money from surcharges and exclusive deals to fund new investments in cable and DSL. But the companies can still make money by charging homes and businesses higher fees for faster or more dependable services. Opponents also claim that, if consumers don't like what they are getting from one Internet service provider, they can simply switch. "If one broadband provider slowed access to fringe bloggers," *The Washington Post* opined, "the provider would lose customers." But, with the industry dominated by a handful of companies, the typical American has a choice of only two providers. And changing services often means losing an e-mail address and facing new connection charges.

Most important, as Stanford Law Professor Lawrence Lessig has argued, the Internet is not only a tool for economic growth, it

is also a public commons

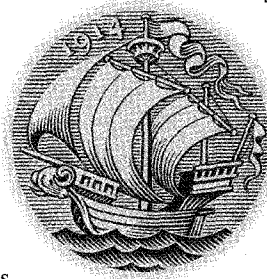
for the exchange of ideas. It is where

Americans can not only search for the best deal on a new digital camera, but also debate the country's future. Unlike the tele-

phone, it is a medium in

which thousands, even millions,

of people can participate in the same discussion at the same time. Unlike television, it is interactive. But it can't function optimally if content is prioritized or filtered by telecom companies. Allowing companies to levy a toll on information providers is not just a blow to consumer choice—it's a blow to democracy. ■



On the Hill Jack in the Box

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

A MODERATE DEMOCRATIC representative is on the phone, relating a thought he had a few days earlier about his party's prospects for winning back the House in November. "Things look really good," he had mused to himself. "You've got to wonder how we're gonna screw it up."

As if on cue, House Democrats—who had been coasting on GOP scandal and disunity—turned against one another. Last Friday, Pennsylvania Democrat Jack Murtha picked a leadership fight over the central issue that splits his party: Iraq. Murtha, who wants a near-immediate withdrawal from Iraq, announced plans to challenge House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, who preaches patience with the occupation, for the job of majority leader. That job would come open if Democrats win back the House in November—hardly a sure thing—making Nancy Pelosi the House speaker. Until last Friday, Hoyer was the widely assumed heir to the majority leader's post. "Nobody saw this coming," one stunned Democratic chief of staff said that afternoon.

Dashing from the House floor to an elevator on Monday evening, the lumbering 74-year-old ex-Marine with the grandfatherly face broadcasted supreme confidence. When I asked about his candidacy, Murtha gripped my elbow tightly and fixed me with penetrating green eyes. "You'll see when the votes come out. I'm gonna win this race. I've never lost a race. *Ever.*"

But Murtha hardly thundered out of the gate. Early news reports were filled with quotes from Democratic House members who groused that Murtha's bid was a diversion from their goals of focusing the press on Republican disarray and uniting to win back the House. What's more, all but the most antiwar Democrats were loath to accentuate their caucus's divisions over Iraq policy. (Republicans, who fully appreciate this, gleefully forced yet another symbolic House debate on the war this week.) And so, less than 24 hours after Murtha's defiant words to me, Pelosi released a statement announcing on the Pennsylvanian's behalf that he would "suspend" his campaign until after the midterm elections. But, as one senior Democratic aide puts it, "the damage has been done," and an intrigue-laden sub rosa campaign is sure to continue anyway. Murtha's feint has sown new mistrust and resentment among House Democrats—and reignited long-standing complaints about Pelosi's leadership. It's a reminder that, as Democrats lunge for victory in the fall elections, their internal divisions may be their own worst enemy.

IT'S HARD to fault Murtha for acting on his obviously sincere belief that the Iraq war is a debacle. As Murtha put it on MSNBC this week: "I think it's absolutely imperative—there's no more important issue to this country than the war. That's why I got involved in the majority leader's race."

Still, the now-suspended campaign is a reminder that Jack Murtha has always been an unlikely liberal hero. A plain-spoken, blue-collar "hawk" who supports big military budgets and voted for both Gulf wars, Murtha stepped out of character last November when he delivered a heart-rending speech about his visits with wounded troops at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, declared the war unwinnable, and called for a swift withdrawal of U.S. troops. The resulting explosion of publicity completely reinvented his political image. For most of his 32-year congressional career, Murtha has been known as a behind-the-scenes operator. His entry in the authoritative *Almanac of American Politics*, written before Murtha began crusading against the war, explains: "He speaks for attribution to few national or local reporters, hardly ever appears on television, and rarely speaks in the House chamber." That has changed drastically: In recent months, Murtha has been a regular fixture on TV talk shows like "Meet the Press" and an icon to the antiwar left—many of them the sort of radical activists who might once have been disgusted by his "pro-military" worldview.

Hoyer—a dapper, backslapping Marylander—has followed an opposite trajectory straight into the crosshairs of angry liberals. Days after Murtha's out-of-Iraq speech last fall, Hoyer responded with a statement warning that a premature withdrawal could result in "disaster." Hoyer has also contended with fury from the left over his pro-business stances, such as support for the Central American Free Trade Agreement and last year's bankruptcy reform bill. Along with his efforts to build ties with K Street lobbyists—ostensibly for the not-absurd purpose of raising more campaign cash for Democrats—Hoyer has been branded "Steny Whore" in some corners of the liberal blogosphere.

But a majority leader has enormous responsibilities over what happens on the House floor—and, in that respect, Murtha should also give liberals pause. It's true that, on economic issues like free trade and bankruptcy, Murtha has taken a more liberal, pro-labor tack than Hoyer. (Both oppose most of the Bush tax cuts.) But Murtha, who represents a culturally conservative steel-and-coal district outside of Pittsburgh, is a Reagan Democrat whose positions on social issues would appall the Burlington City Council. Murtha voted for oil-drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, for instance. He is a pro-lifer who regularly gets a flat zero rating from NARAL. His grade from the National Rifle Association tends to be an A+, thanks to votes like the one he cast in 2004 against Washington, D.C.'s handgun ban.

Nor does Murtha have a dream CV when it comes to one of the prevailing issues of the day: ethics. A longtime Appropriations Committee baron, Murtha was notorious

for his chumminess with defense lobbyists. Last June, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a defense appropriations bill Murtha helped to write funneled more than \$20 million to at least ten companies represented by the lobbying firm where his brother, Kit, is a senior partner.

More troubling is Murtha's role in Congress's last massive corruption scandal: the 1980 Abscam case. Murtha was videotaped meeting with an FBI agent masquerading undercover as an Arab sheik. When the "sheik" offered Murtha \$50,000 in exchange for help gaining U.S. residency, Murtha demurred, saying he wasn't interested "at this time"—but suggested he might rethink it after getting to know the sheik better. Murtha later admitted he'd hoped the sheik might "invest" money in his district, which might be legal but certainly doesn't sound pristine. The Justice Department named Murtha an unindicted co-conspirator, and, when the House Ethics Committee ultimately voted not to bring charges against him, the Committee's special counsel resigned in protest. It doesn't help matters that Murtha was one of exactly four Democrats to vote against their own caucus' motion last month promoting a tougher ethics reform bill than a sham Republican version. Abscam may be ancient history, and no sinister confluence between Murtha's work and his brother's lobbying has been established. Still, Murtha may not be an ideal leader—symbolically, at least—for a party determined to reform a "culture of corruption."

SO WHY ARE some liberals attracted to Murtha? To many, Iraq is all that matters right now. Murtha also enjoys a surprisingly strong bond with Pelosi. He helped to manage her 2002 run for House leader and, along with California's George Miller, plays a part in many of Pelosi's key decisions. "Pelosi, Miller, and Murtha are a troika," explains a former House Democratic aide. Pelosi may also see Murtha as a useful counterweight to Hoyer, whom she has never fully trusted since she defeated him in a 2001 battle for the job of Democratic whip. Murtha also has little love for Hoyer. After Hoyer's statement about Iraq last fall, Murtha cornered New York Democrat Joe Crowley and barked at him, as *The Hill* reported, to "tell your friend Hoyer" to stop stirring up trouble."

Disgruntled Democrats offer two interpretations of the fact that Pelosi had prior warning of Murtha's announcement: One is that she tried and failed to stop Murtha from challenging Hoyer. The other is that she encouraged Murtha to do so but then realized her mistake and persuaded him to change direction. Neither option makes Pelosi look like a strong and competent leader, and some Democratic aides were reporting deep anger about the whole affair—even within normally pro-Pelosi offices.

Earlier this month, a *Time* magazine reporter asked Pelosi about criticism of Howard Dean from some fellow Democrats. "I wish the Democratic divisions could go away," Pelosi replied, so that the party could focus on beating Republicans. "There's so much at stake here." Too bad Jack Murtha found a way to screw it up. ■

Why *Can She Be Stopped?* flopped. Over the Hill

BY ALEXANDER M. BELENKY

IT'S NOISY, CROWDED, and hot on the floor of the Washington Convention Center, site of this year's BookExpo America (BEA), where the nation's publishers are pitching retailers their hottest fall releases. Among the book-related gimmicks vying for attention are a popcorn machine, the world's fastest balloon-animal sculptor, and an entire NASCAR race car. But one type of gimmick is conspicuously absent. Despite the fact that, over the next 18 months, conservative publishers will release about half a dozen titles aimed at swift-boating Hillary Clinton's chances as a presidential candidate in 2008, there are no poster-size book covers of Clinton with bad hair. No key chains commemorating sleepovers in the Lincoln Bedroom. No Whitewater Slip 'n Slide.

It may be that Clinton has joined Lincoln, dogs, and the Holocaust in that pantheon of perennial favorites that have the power to sell themselves. That's certainly the impression publishers give when asked about Clinton's market value. "She's just a great villainess," explains Joel Miller, associate publisher at Nelson Current, which is releasing David Horowitz and Richard Poe's *The Shadow Party: How Hillary Clinton, George Soros, and the Sixties Left Took Over the Democratic Party*. But the lack of Clinton hoopla at the BEA may also suggest what publishers won't openly admit—that the prospects for the current round of Clinton books aren't actually that good.

One explanation is that there's more competition for Hillary-hating readers. Whereas longtime conservative publisher Regnery kicked the Clintons around to great success during the 1990s, since 2003, major publishers Penguin, Random House, and Simon & Schuster have all created conservative imprints (Sentinel, Crown Forum, and Threshold Editions, respectively); Christian publisher Thomas Nelson has launched Nelson Current; and the smaller, independent World Ahead Publishing has set up shop on the West Coast. Together, they've flooded the market with Clinton hatchet jobs—nearly a dozen in the last three years.

But there's another explanation, based on the disappointing sales of most of these previous books: The public is suffering from Hillary Fatigue. Clinton's bland senatorial personality and courting of conservatives like Rupert Murdoch have neutralized the liberal dragon-lady image. Readers, even conservative ones, are tired of hearing the same old stories about Clinton's sapphic secrets, her radical feminist beliefs, and her overweening ambition. They're no longer buying it. Not now. And, if the Clinton book market crash is any indication, not in 2008.

FOR AN EXAMPLE of the increasingly lukewarm reception that Clinton books are getting, take a look at John Podhoretz's latest screed. This call to arms, *Can She Be Stopped? Hillary Clinton Will Be the Next President of the United States Unless ...*, was just published last month by Crown Forum with a strong first printing of 75,000 copies. On the surface, the book possessed all the right ingredients for success: a big-name author with a proven track record; solid print, radio, and online publicity, including a rare exclusive with Matt Drudge; and a novel take on the subject. "It is the first book to take her seriously specifically as a candidate for the presidency," says Jed Donahue, Podhoretz's editor at Crown Forum.

Yet, with only 2,000 copies sold thus far, according to Nielsen BookScan, the book hasn't lived up to expectations. Publishers often object that BookScan underreports sales, but Donahue admits that *Can She Be Stopped?* has had trouble getting started. "To be frank, it's not as encouraging as we would hope," he says. Podhoretz is still out doing media promos, but it's unlikely that sales will pick up much. "By and large, it's probably fair to say that, for a current affairs book that's very media-driven, the first few weeks are very important," Donahue says.

The performance of Podhoretz's book isn't the only sign of flagging interest in Clinton. Between 1996 and 2001, at least eight of eleven anti-Clinton books appeared on *The New York Times*' best-seller list. But, since 2003, only three of eleven have done so—Dick Morris's *Rewriting History* (a rebuttal to Clinton's *Living History*), Christopher Andersen's *American Evita: Hillary Clinton's Path to Power*, and, last year, Edward Klein's *The Truth About Hillary: What She Knew, When She Knew It, and How Far She'll Go to Become President*. Klein's book is also the only Clinton-basher in the last five years to sell more than 100,000 copies, the industry-standard definition of a hit. *Rewriting History* sold 70,000 copies two years ago, but Morris's latest effort, *Condi vs. Hillary: The Next Great Presidential Race*, has sold just over half that amount since debuting last fall.

Marji Ross, the head of Regnery, expects sales to pick up as the 2008 election approaches. (She's publishing *The Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy's Dossier on Hillary Rodham Clinton* this fall, so she has reason to remain optimistic.) But she concedes: "With Hillary, I think there is a good argument to say to publishers, unless they have a very specific message in their Hillary book ... 'Keep your powder dry.'"

THE SUCCESSES AND failures of recent books provide a blueprint—however unscientific—for what sorts of charges will and won't resonate with conservative voters in 2008. It won't be enough, for example, to make simple reference to the fact that Clinton's desire to be president "has long been an open secret," as Carl Limbacher did in *Hillary's Scheme: Inside the Next Clinton's Ruthless Agenda to Take the White House* (14,000 copies sold). The idea of Clinton as an ambitious woman no longer seems as threatening as it did before she held elected office. Instead, authors have to cast her quest for the White House as a conspiratorial "Dr. Evil"—esque strategy known as "The Plan," as Andersen did in *American Evita* (28,000 copies).

Then there's Clinton's personal life. In 1999, Andersen's best-seller *Bill and Hillary: The Marriage* indulged in speculation that her "drab appearance and her brusque manner" signaled a taste for forbidden love. Klein, however, had to find an actual college friend who "was rumored to be Hillary's lesbian lover" to generate interest in *The Truth About Hillary*. Bill's philandering is also stale news. Since its May 2005 publication, *Their Lives: The Women Targeted by the Clinton Machine* has sold just 2,000 copies.

In fact, after years of harping on Clinton's days as a student activist at Wellesley, conservatives even appear tired of the notion that she's a liberal ideologue. In *Madame Hillary: The Dark Road to the White House* (9,000 copies), R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. couldn't captivate readers with his dissection of her early political influences (such as Saul Alinsky) or his argument that she would start "a national Cambodian re-education camp for anyone caught wearing an Adam Smith necktie or scarf." Instead of attacking Clinton as a loud-mouthed radical, critics might have slightly better luck attacking her as the sort of duplicitous corporation found in a Michael Moore film. In *Rewriting History*, Morris outlined what he called the "HILLARY brand," whose purpose is "to hide who she is, and to project what she isn't." "The worst thing about the HILLARY brand," he laments, "is that ... we get only the carefully coiffed, ultra-sensitive, hyper-programmed media package." There's really no better evidence that Clinton has successfully shed her liberal image: Conservatives are no longer taking issue with her ideology but with her overuse of hairspray. ■



Kosovo Dispatch

Final Status Quo

BY JEREMY KAHN

SEVENTY-YEAR-OLD Svetislav Jovicić sits in the noonday sun on the dusty steps of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Orahovac and laments what his life has become. He used to own a winery in the lush green hills surrounding this south central Kosovo town, a place his ancestors have lived for more than three centuries. As a younger man, he played for an amateur soccer club, earning the friendship of many of his ethnic Albanian teammates. "For many, many years in Orahovac, everyone lived very well with Albanians," Jovicić says.

But now, his winery is gone, destroyed by the Albanians who seized the land six years ago. His Albanian soccer buddies never visit anymore. Today, Jovicić lives as a virtual prisoner in the tiny warren of garbage-strewn streets that make up the town's Serbian enclave. Located just uphill from Orahovac's town center, the enclave's border with the surrounding Albanian neighborhood is demarcated by rolls of barbed wire that can be used to seal off the tiny ghetto in the event of ethnic violence. On a number of occasions since 1999, Albanians here attacked Serbs and their property. During major ethnic violence in March 2004, two Serbian Orthodox churches in nearby villages were burned to the ground. "Recently, it has been mostly peaceful, but it is not safe to go down," Jovicić says. He and other residents of the Serbian enclave fear they will be attacked if they wander into the town center. "They say it is open for free movement, but that is not the reality."

The reality is bleak. Jovicić complains that there are no jobs for his children here; Albanians refuse to hire them. He subsists on the 40 euros per month he receives from international aid organizations. Faced with such conditions—and with the occasional waves of ethnic strife—many of Orahovac's Serbs have left, moving to new homes and new lives in Serbia. Once, the town had a Serbian population of more than 2,500. Today, 500 at most remain—all of them living within the enclave, guarded day and night by a contingent of Austrian soldiers.

The Austrians are part of a 17,000-man NATO force that continues to keep the peace in Kosovo seven years after a NATO bombing campaign drove the Serbian military out of the province. Since then, Kosovo has been administered by a U.N. special representative, although the province has remained technically a part of Serbia. U.N.-brokered talks currently underway in Vienna between negotiators from

Belgrade and Pristina are supposed to decide the province's "final status" by the end of the year—that is, whether it remains a part of Serbia, becomes its own state, or is offered something in between. While Serbian President Boris Tadić has proposed "more than autonomy, less than independence" for the breakaway province, most observers believe the negotiations will result in an independent Kosovo. When that happens, one of the most significant pieces of unfinished business from the 1990s humanitarian interventions in the Balkans will be concluded—but only on paper.

In the United States, the American-led intervention in Kosovo is widely perceived as a success, especially by liberals who are fond of contrasting it to the mess President Bush has made in Iraq. NATO went to war in 1999 to end a brutal campaign of repression and ethnic cleansing against Kosovar Albanians launched by then-Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, in which at least 10,000 Albanians were killed. In this, the NATO campaign succeeded. But ending Milošević's reign of terror was not the only goal of NATO intervention. For the last seven years, the United States and the international community have invested billions of dollars in Kosovo in the hopes of building a peaceful, democratic, and multi-ethnic society. "Failure to secure a multi-ethnic Kosovo would be a failure of our efforts over the last six years, and indeed, the last decade," Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns told a congressional committee last year.

Yet this multi-ethnic dream remains almost as distant as it was on the day NATO forces arrived. Freed from Serbian oppression, Albanians—who make up about 90 percent of Kosovo's 2.2 million people—have taken revenge on their Serb neighbors. They killed at least 1,000 Serb civilians during and in the immediate aftermath of the NATO bombing campaign, and, since then, as many as 100,000 Serbs have been driven from their homes. Those that remain, such as Jovicić, live in ghettos, their movement and ability to work severely restricted. Meanwhile, in northern Kosovo, which still hosts a large Serb population, ethnic Albanians live similarly precarious lives. Following the last major spasm of ethnic violence in March 2004, an uneasy calm has descended across Kosovo. Mainstream Albanian politicians, conscious that continued ethnic strife would hurt the chances for independence, say pleasant things about building multi-ethnic institutions and protecting the rights of the Serb minority. Beneath the surface, however, darker political currents swirl.

ALBIN KURTI DOES not look like a dangerous man. With his tousled brown hair, Elvis Costello glasses, and faded blue sweater, the 31-year-old sitting in the lobby of Pristina's Grand Hotel sipping a macchiato could pass for a typical Williamsburg hipster—or at least the talented computer science student he once was. But, to hear some tell it, Kurti poses a grave threat to Kosovo's future as a peaceful, multi-ethnic state.

Kurti is something of a cult hero to the worldwide Alban-

Jeremy Kahn traveled to Kosovo on a German Marshall Fund fellowship.

ian diaspora. As a student at the University of Pristina in the late '90s, he led an underground movement that organized sit-ins and other nonviolent demonstrations against Serbian control of the university. Sporting long hair and a mustache (think Yanni), he quickly became a recognizable face of opposition to Serbian power in Pristina. He later worked as an assistant to Adem Demaçi, the political leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the guerrilla group that was fighting to liberate the province from Serbia. During the NATO bombing campaign in 1999, Serbian police arrested Kurti. When Serb forces withdrew from Kosovo that summer, they took him and other Albanian prisoners with them. Kurti was held largely incommunicado for nine months and endured savage beatings at the hands of his jailers. Almost a year after his initial arrest, he appeared, hair and mustache shorn, in a Serb court, where he was tried and sentenced to 15 years for subversion and conspiracy to commit terrorist acts. "Free Albin Kurti Now!" became a rallying cry among ethnic Albanians from Pristina to San Francisco. T-shirts and posters were printed with the slogan, and rock concerts were held to support the cause. International pressure for his release mounted, but with Milošević still in power in Belgrade, Kurti remained in a cell. Only after Milošević's ouster did his successor, Vojislav Kostunica, finally let Kurti go in December 2001.

Back in Pristina, Kurti now leads Self-Determination!, a movement that claims thousands of supporters in 17 cities and towns throughout Kosovo. Self-Determination! is opposed to the U.N. presence in Kosovo and also to the final-status negotiations. "People don't want status, they want freedom," Kurti tells me. He argues that independence should not come through a negotiated settlement with Serbia—which, he says, has shown "no remorse, no repentance" for its persecution of Albanians during the '90s—nor through U.N. decree (a possible outcome if the Serb negotiating team walks out of the talks, as some think likely). Instead, he wants to hold an immediate referendum of Kosovo's citizens. "A referendum is democratic. The current situation is not democratic," he says. "The [U.N. special representative] makes a decision with four or five people and that decides the fate of 2.2 million people. What is democratic about that?"

Kurti says he has no problem with the Serbian community in Kosovo—"we are fighting a system, not the people," he says—but he talks in paranoid tones about Serbia's continued designs on Kosovo. He speaks darkly of "50,000 spies—Kosovar Albanians—here working for Serbia." And he accuses the Serbs of using the final-status negotiations to continue Milošević's campaign of ethnic cleansing. From a blue folder he carries with him, Kurti produces a set of maps and points to areas where he claims Serbia is trying, through the final-status negotiations, to resettle Serbs. "They are trying to surround Kosovo Albanians, and they will be a backdoor for Serbia to seize territory," he says. He thinks Serbia wants to partition Kosovo. (The United States, its European allies, and Russia have all said that par-

tition is not on the table.) "This will bring war! This will bring violence! We want to stop this," Kurti says, pointing emphatically at his maps.

Kurti claims to be a fervent believer in nonviolence. And so far, Self-Determination!'s "actions," as he likes to call them, have indeed been peaceful. Kurti and his followers have held numerous protests outside the U.N. headquarters in Pristina, surrounded the compound with yellow tape reading CRIME SCENE—DO NOT CROSS, blocked access to the compound with bales of hay, trashed U.N. flags, and spray-painted slogans on the compound's walls. Just last week, Kurti and more than 80 supporters were arrested for protesting outside the U.N. compound; Kurti got ten days in jail. They have also tossed rotten eggs at the motorcades of Serb politicians when they have visited Pristina. ("Here you do this and they call it radical. In Palestine, it would be ridiculous," Kurti says.) But some of Kurti's actions have moved in a more sinister direction.

ON APRIL 14, Kurti led a demonstration of several hundred people in the western Kosovo town of Decani, blocking the entrance to the U.N. offices there to protest the U.N.'s decision to designate 800 hectares surrounding Decani's Serbian Orthodox monastery a "protected zone." Nestled amid the verdant woods beneath the snow-capped Prokletije mountains, the Decani monastery has stood for centuries as an important touchstone of Serb culture, even as the Serbian population in the surrounding countryside slowly withered away. Here, beneath the elaborately frescoed walls of the monastery's chapel, lies the fourteenth-century Serbian saint King Stefan, his body allegedly preserved, as in life, through some supernatural force. And here, in front of the altar, hangs a massive bronze chandelier that, according to local myth, was smelted from the armor of the soldiers who fell in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the ancient defeat that still haunts Serb memories and shapes their self-conception as the noble defenders of Christendom against the Islamic invaders from the East.

The monastery, which has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a tempting target for Albanian extremists because of its symbolic import. Even though the monks there sheltered Albanian families during Milošević's ethnic-cleansing campaign, the monastery was mortared during fighting in 1999 and 2000 (although the church itself survived practically unscathed). During the March 2004 ethnic unrest, mortars again fell within the monastery walls, and Albanian rioters attempted to march on the place; they turned back after local Albanian leaders pleaded with them to stop. Today, the monastery is guarded by Italian soldiers, who escort the monks in armored vehicles whenever they leave the monastery grounds. The United Nations designated the land around the monastery a protected zone to prevent logging and development of the monastery's land, where a restaurant has already been illegally constructed. "We are just trying to protect the environment around the

monastery," says Father Sava Janjić, the monastery's ginger-haired spokesmonk, sounding like a Sunday morning public radio host with his perfect English and mellifluous, high-pitched voice.

But that's not how Kurti sees it. He accuses the United Nations of granting Decani and other Serbian Orthodox monasteries "extra-territoriality." And, at its Decani rally, Self-Determination! was joined by Avdyl Mushkolaj, the head of the KLA Veterans' Association, known for its radical positions and for violent demonstrations against the United Nations, as well as by members of Balli Kombëtar, an extreme Albanian nationalist party dedicated to the creation of a "Greater Albania" that takes its name from a World War II-era organization allied with the Nazis. These groups are linked to past atrocities against Serb civilians. U.N. officials also believe that these extremists may have been responsible for assassination and kidnapping threats against U.N. staff in Decani last fall. It is Self-Determination!'s growing alliance with such elements that has set off alarm bells. "[Kurti] is moving ever closer to building a brown-shirt organization," says one longtime observer of Kosovo's politics in Pristina. "He personally adheres to nonviolence, but he marks the target for others." As long as there are extremists willing to stoke ethnic grudges, Kosovo will remain a powder keg.

KURTI'S RHETORIC CERTAINLY seems to resonate in Decani, where freshly hung posters pay homage to KLA martyrs and where the safe zone around the monastery has stirred resentment even among moderate citizens. Such anger has Kosovo Serbs worried, but they're not in a position to do much about it. Following the March 2004 ethnic violence, most Kosovo Serb politicians withdrew from Kosovo's government in protest. They boycotted the province's October 2004 elections, and they chose not to send representatives to the final-status talks in Vienna, allowing Belgrade to negotiate on their behalf. The Serbs thought this would reinforce their position that Kosovo is an unseverable part of Serbia. But it didn't—and now, they're less able to advocate for their interests, which are not necessarily the same as Belgrade's. "The message to the [Kosovo] Serbs must be clear: Don't expect others to resolve your problems. You must participate," Father Sava says. "You can't expect the clock to be turned back ten years, as if it were just a bad dream."

Mainstream Albanian politicians say they would welcome a greater Kosovo Serb presence at the bargaining table. "The Serbs are always an object—an object of negotiation, an object of discussion. And they should become a subject," says Vetton Surroi, a Kosovo newspaper owner who now heads a political party called ORA. "Everyone is negotiating on their behalf except the Serbs themselves." Hashim Thaçi, a former KLA leader nicknamed "the Snake," was once known as an Albanian hardliner. But even Thaçi, who now leads Kosovo's main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), tells me that he favors an affirmative action program

to bring Kosovo Serbs into government positions, the police force, the army, and other civic institutions. "They are citizens of Kosovo," he says. "It is their homeland, too." Thaçi adds that he is in favor of granting Kosovo's Serbs dual Kosovar and Serbian citizenship and giving Serbian communities a large degree of municipal autonomy. "But, unfortunately, my impression is that [the Serbs] will be hesitant to be included until final status is resolved," he says. (And perhaps with good reason. Despite Thaçi's statements about protecting minority rights, local PDK members in Decani joined demonstrations against the monastery there and signed Kurti's petition, with its inflammatory claim that the monastery enjoys "extra-territoriality.")

The integration of Kosovo's Serbs into a new Kosovar society has been complicated by Belgrade, which has continued to fund parallel public institutions in the Serbian parts of Kosovo, particularly in the region north of the Ibar River, which divides the city of Mitrovica, an area where about a third of the remaining Serbs in Kosovo now live. Albanians driving through this area remove their Kosovo license plates for fear of attack, and Albanians walking down the main street in North Mitrovica risk being pummeled. A similar situation has developed in Strpce, a Serbian town in southern Kosovo. Belgrade pays for Serbian-language schools, health clinics, media, and—in violation of U.N. resolutions—even a police force and judicial system in these regions. The International Crisis Group (ICG) has identified these parallel structures as a potential long-term danger to Kosovo's future as a unified, independent state. "If certain municipalities were put together into a region with Belgrade's support, would that be used as a lever with which to create a separate entity?" asks Alex Anderson with the ICG's Kosovo office.

Perhaps the most dangerous scenario for Kosovo, however, is an end to final-status talks that does not result in independence. Then, the likelihood of Albanian-on-Serb violence will skyrocket, according to international observers. In fact, the March 2004 ethnic riots, which may have begun spontaneously enough, are widely believed to have been fueled and prolonged by Albanian politicians who used the conflagration to pressure the international community to move toward final-status talks.

Even if Kosovo gains independence, most Albanian politicians and international diplomats in Pristina envision NATO troops remaining in the country for years in order to safeguard against ethnic violence and protect Serbian Orthodox religious sites. But that may not be enough to reassure Serbs in enclaves like Orahovac. Jovicić, the former winemaker and soccer player, says that, if Kosovo becomes independent, he will simply leave. "Kosovo is not Albania, it is part of Serbia," he insists. "After all of that which history has brought us, it will be impossible for us to stay." Jovicić says he doesn't buy the assurances of Albanian politicians that Kosovo can become a multi-ethnic society. And there are plenty of reasons to doubt. Then again, if all the Serbs leave, Kosovo will never have a chance to find out. ■

Glenn Reynolds's utopia. Technobabble

BY CHRISTINE ROSEN

GLENN REYNOLDS IS an unlikely visionary. Before he emerged as the "InstaPundit," he was just a law professor at the University of Tennessee, writing on administrative law and the Second Amendment for publications like *Law and Policy in International Business* and *Jurimetrics*. These outlets, however, didn't satisfy Reynolds's desire to reach a wider audience, and, in 2001, he began posting messages under a variety of handles like "AGAndroid" in "the Fray," the readers' forum for the online magazine *Slate*. Reynolds seemed to have an opinion about everything—from Canadian prescription drugs to the relative attractiveness of rock groupies—and a knack for pumping out copy faster than a wire reporter. His celebrity among the *Slate* Fraysters prompted him to strike out on his own. And, in August 2001, Reynolds created a blog, *InstaPundit*, where he could tie together his academic and outside interests and provide links and commentary on news and opinion journalism.

If it weren't for September 11, Reynolds's commentary on the *Slate* bulletin board might have been the height of his fame. But, in the dark moments following the attacks, the public craved commentary—and *InstaPundit* supplied it in torrents. His conservative politics and implacable compulsion to post earned him a massive following. Today, the blog-tracker Technorati ranks *InstaPundit* as one of the top 100 blogs, and Reynolds is known to many as the "blog-father," a moniker that pays tribute to his role in shaping the new genre. Print journalists frequently turn to him for his opinions on the medium. He even has an online store, where loyal fans can purchase merchandise ("classic thong" underwear for \$8.99) emblazoned with the *InstaPundit* name and the slogan AHEAD OF THE CURVE SINCE 30 MINUTES AGO!

Earlier this year, Reynolds decamped to a slightly more old-fashioned medium and published a book, *An Army of Davids: How Markets and Technology Empower Ordinary People to Beat Big Media, Big Government, and Other Goliaths*. This tome won't be remembered for its lapidary prose or polemical genius. But, in its way, the book is a defining work of an era. Because the blogosphere is an essentially responsive medium mired in discussion of Topic A, it has never slowed down to fully lay out its worldview,

to explain its ideology—at least, not until now. Like many of his cyber-colleagues, Reynolds believes in a form of triumphalism: that his medium has transformed the exchange of ideas and information. When this triumphalism appears in the course of a 200-word blog post, it seems remarkably plausible. As bloggers never tire of reminding the world, they brought down Trent Lott and Dan Rather and powered Howard Dean's ascent. But, at book length, as the ideology's core assumptions and convictions are laid bare, the idiocies and dangers of this triumphalism become all too apparent.

DANGEROUS, TO BE fair, hardly seems the right term to apply to what Reynolds describes as the "comfy chair revolution." Following in the grand tradition of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and William Dean Howells's *A Traveler from Altruria*, Reynolds waxes lyrical about the golden future created by technology. Imagine a world of Wi-Fi hot spots and laptops that allows humankind to escape the oppressive office. Reynolds enthusiastically describes the hours he spends "comfortably ensconced upon a leather couch" with his laptop at his local Borders bookstore. In Reynolds's world, people can work anywhere, firing off e-mails to co-workers in between playing video games with their kids in the basement rec room or mixing and producing music in the family garage. (Reynolds himself is an amateur musician who used computer software to create a soundtrack for his wife's documentary and who runs a small record label with his brother.) People tired of the flavorless offerings of beer manufacturers can brew their own, as Reynolds does. And consumers sick of the same old boring products can now, as Reynolds notes, do things "their way," as his own daughter did at the make-your-own-toy store Build-a-Bear. He tells me, "It's worker control of the means of production, without all that tedious communism stuff." Mr. Lenin, wipe that latte off your mustache.

The late-nineteenth-century techno-utopians hoped to transcend the horrors of corporate and industrial capitalism. And there are strands that connect this older vision to Reynolds and contemporary techno-utopians like Ray Kurzweil, James Hughes, and Ramez Naam. Both variations claim to side with the little guy—soldiers in Reynolds's "army of Davids"—in his battles against nasty bureaucracies. An important difference, however, separates this new breed. Where the older techno-utopians believed that government could exploit technology to create unprecedented human abundance and happiness, the new breed of techno-utopians can all be broadly described as libertarians. They believe that technology, in many cases, obviates the need for government.

In Reynolds's ideal world, technology allows us to circumvent large, outdated institutions and the elites who run them in order to pursue our dreams, whether the dream is to capture terrorists, produce records, or publish books.

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When he peers into the foam of his home-brewed beer, Reynolds sees a revolution—"a future in which many more people think of themselves as writers, filmmakers, musicians, or journalists than in the past," he writes. The little guy can be a poet or a pop star; with technology as his handmaiden, anything is possible. But this follow-your-bliss vision of individual fulfillment has little patience for the standards necessary for judging genuine talent, which is why Reynolds's book reads more like a middle-aged hobbyist's utopian manifesto than a blueprint for cultural renaissance. "The central point of the book is the power of *fun*," Reynolds tells me. "All of this stuff is fun to do. This is very important."

Reynolds's enthusiasm for the future possibilities presented by technology is wildly optimistic, and his book treats the outré dogma of a klatch of futurists (Kurzweil, Vernor Vinge) as conventional wisdom. The comfy chair revolution is merely the beginning, he assures us. Nanotechnology will soon allow us to create things like refrigerators from "sunlight and dirt" and usher in an era when material goods are almost free and "personal property would become almost meaningless." Space exploration by private individuals, not nation-states, will lead to the colonization of Mars. Life-extension technologies will allow us to live longer, more prosperous lives. And, as the pace of technological change continues to increase, Reynolds enthuses, we will approach "the Singularity"—a term popularized by Kurzweil to describe the point at which humanity is so irreversibly transformed by its own technologies (especially artificial intelligence) that we no longer recognize ourselves as human.

As Reynolds notes approvingly, the Internet has been remarkably effective at promoting the ideas of technopians—extropians and transhumanists and proponents of genetic enhancement all have their own websites and blogs. Like his fellow techno-utopians, Reynolds dismisses criticism of these ideas as "the usual skepticism regarding the new." As long as individuals control the technologies, we should welcome them, he argues. As for the risk of catastrophic unintended consequences from our use of these technologies, Reynolds is sanguine. "You'd better hope that I'm right," he says, chuckling. "It's basically an unstoppable phenomenon."

THERE'S ONE PLACE, at least, where this unstoppable phenomenon may indeed quickly triumph. It's precisely the area where Reynolds now toils: media. Reynolds would argue that he is a proponent of what his fellow blogger Jim Treacher calls "we-dia," journalism practiced by the technologically empowered, amateur masses. Reynolds writes, "Millions of Americans who were once in awe of the punditocracy now realize that anyone can do this stuff—and that many unknowns can do it better than the lords of the profession." As Reynolds argues with unrestrained glee, Big Media is in retreat. And, if circulation numbers and share prices are reliable indicators,

he's clearly right. To survive, he writes, the news media must embrace the citizen-journalist ethos of the blogosphere. Blogger dispatches and digital photos from readers, he claims, will provide coverage as rich and more thorough than that of Elisabeth Bumiller and John F. Burns, for example. Those who don't adapt, Reynolds warns, may "wind up being replaced by those who do."

But what would we-dia actually look like? This is a question that can be easily answered by *InstaPundit*. Reynolds's blog consists largely of links to news or opinion articles and other blogs followed by comments consisting of such profound observations as "Heh," or "Read the whole thing," or "Indeed." (These are recurring tropes whose centrality can't be exaggerated.) What Reynolds lacks in analysis, he makes up for in abundance of content. On any given day, he'll provide his readers nearly 20 entries—or, if you can stomach it, more.

The blogosphere doesn't universally suffer from this extreme case of logorrhea or vacuity. (Nor are newspaper columnists immune from the latter syndrome.) It contains plenty of experts and thoughtful analysts who excel at precisely the analysis that is hardly the forte of newspaper reporters and eludes old-fashioned pundits. But Reynolds exposes how the blogosphere, at its worst, values timeliness over thought. After linking to an article on congressional earmarks, he'll add, "Well, that's encouraging. Sheesh." *Quod erat demonstrandum*. Or he'll carp, "Nancy Pelosi, on the other hand, is just dumb"—a point that may be perfectly true but probably requires some explanation or proof beyond the simple assertion. In the end, this method provides the intellectual horsepower of, say, an Andy Rooney commentary. To wit, he wrote in December, "A battery recall on the XM portables. Is it just me, or are we seeing more battery recalls lately." Well, no need for *The New York Times*, then.

If, as Reynolds predicts, the rise of the blogosphere comes at the expense of older institutions like newspapers and magazines, then he will shed no tears. That's because his libertarianism makes him a fervent believer in the wisdom of markets. But, in the market of opinions, can you count on talent and insight to triumph? The case of Reynolds—"Heh," "Indeed"—would suggest that the market for opinion doesn't make its judgments based on logical coherence or intellectual honesty. Reynolds's terse, almost meaningless commentary may make him the *reductio ad absurdum* of the blogosphere's worst tendencies. But these tendencies happen to be its ubiquitous ones.

Of course, the so-called "mainstream media" and academic experts have their shortcomings. And, thanks to Reynolds and the blogosphere, these have become well-known: self-importance, a willingness to bloviate on subjects about which they know nothing, et cetera. But the old institutions—the academy, publishing, the press—are essentially arbiters that vetted writing and thought before broadcasting to the world. They provide editors and peer review, valuing opinion formulated by sustained research over opinion produced by

a Google search. They are the superego checking the authorial id. But the techno-utopianism that haunts the blogosphere doesn't account for the importance of any of this. Reynolds is too excited that software downloaded to his laptop has allowed him to circumvent record company executives and newspaper editors.

In effect, the blogosphere has become a crude form of the techno-humanism that Reynolds celebrates—technology now permits thoughts to be constantly published in more-or-less real time, as if the blog were an extension of the brain. And, even if the blogosphere could foster a more reflective discussion, it hugely privileges the instant response and the explosive rant on the issue of the moment. This may be valuable in certain circumstances. Blogging has undeniably made it much easier for people to share opinions and information and to find like-minded souls. Patches of good writing exist out there, as well as impeccable argumentation. But it's nothing more than old-fashioned techno-utopianism to assume that the blogosphere could adequately supersede the old media order or to believe that traditional institutions can be so easily and casually jettisoned.

And, unfortunately, it's not just libertarians like Reynolds who share this faith in the power of the market to generate news and opinion. Even if liberal blogs like *Daily Kos* and *Atrios* aren't so enamored of nanotechnology or space exploration, they share Reynolds's triumphalism about the medium. In fact, techno-utopianism is the one sentiment that unites both left and right in the blogosphere.

This new techno-utopianism is the heir to Bellamy and Howells, but it has turned their vision of the future on its head. The old futurism celebrated the expert and venerated the scientist who could master and harness technology. Reynolds will have none of this. *InstaPundit* resides in a world where technology can be harnessed by any semi-literate with a PC. His hero is the guy without any expertise who can see through the palaver of elites. There's no need to accumulate expertise through years of study or experience, because the Internet has become the great repository of knowledge and experience. You have to admire his argumentative boldness. He has taken figures who have been historic punch lines—the dilettante, the hack—and turned them into civilizational saviors. It's a brave new world. Heh. ■

Liberal activists on the Strip. Wag the Blog

BY RYAN LIZZA

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

IT'S THE FIRST night of Yearly Kos, and some thousand liberal bloggers and dozens of reporters are winding their way into a windowless conference room at the Riviera Hotel to hear Markos Moulitsas, founder of the political website *Daily Kos*, deliver the evening's keynote address. For many of the bloggers, it's the first time they've met in the flesh, and, as they recognize one another's online names, which are written on cards hanging from orange lanyards, they break out into excited conversations. As one blogger later puts it, "We're all celebrities to each other."

But someone is missing: Armando. A favorite blogger and foreign policy wonk, Armando earned the privilege of posting on the front page of *Daily Kos*. But, before the festivities began in Las Vegas, *National Review Online* revealed this hero of the liberal blogosphere to be Armando Lloréns-Sar, a corporate lawyer in Puerto Rico who has represented Wal-Mart and Clorox. Even though this information is a matter of public record, and even though Lloréns-Sar's picture and affiliation are listed on his firm's website, his unmasking sent shockwaves through the *Daily Kos* community and led Lloréns-Sar to quit the site—and, according to bloggers here, cancel his appearance at the convention, lest his pastime create a conflict for his employers.

Many topics will be discussed this weekend, but the bloggers keep coming back to Armando. They don't mind that Armando is a corporate lawyer or that he practices his trade for corporations. What really upsets them is that his seems like a cautionary tale about what can happen as the movement matures and their newfound celebrity threatens their anonymity. In hushed conversations, they refer bitterly to the "outing of Armando."

Their anxiety is only heightened by the fact that Las Vegas, according to *Kos* blogger SusanG, is their own, albeit voluntary, "coming out." And, in many ways, it is a heady experience. How could it not be? When Mark Warner spends over \$50,000 on a party complete with an Elvis impersonator, thrill rides, and ice sculptures; Wesley Clark hosts an open-bar soirée at the Hard Rock Casino; and Bill Richardson buys everyone breakfast, the so-called "netroots" start to feel a little special. SusanG sums up the heady mix of narcissism and euphoria: "It seems like every fourth person you run into is here covering the phenomenon of ... us. We're worth it, too. We are something else."

But there is still a discomfiting sense among the bloggers here that, as with Armando, nothing in their world will be the same after this weekend. They are moving from faceless writers talking in what sometimes seems like an echo chamber to a national movement courted by presidential candi-



dates and covered seriously by the press. They are finally meeting the politicians they bash and praise from the safety of their basements. Las Vegas could be the beginning of a new era of blogger influence and authority. Or it might just be the weekend they all sold out.

THIS UNCERTAINTY OVER what will happen at the first major convention for liberal bloggers drives Yearly Kos participants into a strange and ritualistic dance. Throughout the four-day convention, bloggers, politicians, and reporters circle one another like a trio of underwater species not quite sure who eats whom anymore. The bloggers alternatively ridicule and suck up to the reporters. The politicians prostrate themselves before the bloggers one minute and then roll their eyes at them in off-the-record pow-wows with the “mainstream media” the next. The press smile and yuk it up with the bloggers during the day and escape to decadent, MSM-only meals at night. All three groups seem to agree that everything in their respective spheres is changing because of the blogs, but nobody is quite sure how.

For their part, the bloggers are at a turning point. In Las Vegas, they are glimpsing their first taste of the establishment and watching as some of their leaders actually join it. “What they seem to be struggling with,” says a Democratic opera-

tive here with the bloggers for the weekend, “is when the rebels become the establishment, are you anything more than being rebellious? What does it mean when Markos has a press secretary and gives a speech in a ballroom?”

The flesh-and-blood mingling with the reporters they excoriate and the politicians they prod is causing some cognitive dissonance. One night, I sit across the dinner table from Christy Hardin-Smith, a former prosecutor who blogs under the name of ReddHedd at *firedoglake*, the go-to site for all things Valerie Plame. We dine on a five-course meal at a swank trattoria in Mandalay Bay that was paid for by a liberal Washington organization. The next day, at a panel devoted to political journalism, Hardin-Smith insists that the problem with Washington reporters is they are addicted to the “cocktail weenie” circuit in Washington. The previous night’s dinner was off the record, but I can say without breaking any rules that the appetizer was beef carpaccio, not pigs in a blanket, and Hardin-Smith seemed to enjoy every bite. Her point about the Washington press may be valid—getting too close to those you cover can poison good journalism—but most reporters are about as compromised by weenies as Hardin-Smith was by her carpaccio. Later, passing her in the hall after one of the conclaves of bloggers and 2008 candidates, she seems glad to be out of the house, learning a few things. “I’m a stay-at-home mom who blogs all day and isn’t used to being around this many people,” she says, noting how exhausted she is after doing four press interviews in one day. “This is freakishly large.”

Even the authors of the blog manifesto *Crashing the Gate*, Moulitsas and Jerome Armstrong, have not so much crashed the gates as been politely invited inside and offered a comfortable chair and a cocktail. Armstrong is a political consultant to Warner, the former governor of Virginia and one of the hottest Democrats in the party. His portfolio is helping Warner navigate the blog world, but the word is he is already growing beyond that ghetto into a broader strategic role. His co-author, Moulitsas, polishes off the rough edges that have made him a famous agitator on his blog and spends his Sunday morning as a roundtable participant on “Meet the Press,” where he sounds less like a revolutionary and more like a pundit who has mastered the art of the sound bite. “I think what we’ve seen is that actually the people who read these blogs are a real cross section of the Democratic Party, a real cross section of America,” he smoothly tells Tim Russert.

In addition to figuring out their relationship with the establishment, the bloggers in Vegas are busy debating their direction. Aside from the timing of Karl Rove’s presumed indictment (oops), the most passionate conversations in the small knots of activists I interview is over whether to follow the lead of blogfather Moulitsas and define the nascent online activist movement as strictly a machine that helps Democrats win or to create one that is more ideologically pure and presses for a set of specific principles.

I am thrust into this debate on the first morning of the conference at a small presentation by the Progressive Ma-

jority, an organization that recruits and runs liberal candidates. Like the politicians courting the bloggers, many liberal groups are here trying to push back against Moulitsas's partisan vision. Gloria Totten, Progressive Majority's president, admits she's only "an intermittent reader" of blogs, partly because she's frustrated by their emphasis on partisanship rather than progressivism. Raj Shukla, the group's Wisconsin finance director, cautions that bloggers and their readers are wildly unrepresentative of the Democratic Party, noting that they are mostly male, well-off, and white. "Just look around this conference," he says.

The divide between the partisans and the ideologues is generational. In addition to being white and wealthy, the average *Daily Kos* reader is about 45 years old, which is clear from all the gray hair at the Riviera. What emerges from the weekend is that the leadership and public faces of the liberal blogosphere are young, while the rank and file is middle-aged. The twenty- and thirtysomethings have created a space for the forty- and fiftysomethings of the old New Left to reconnect with the political activism of their youth. The young, tech-savvy pioneers of the actual blogs tend to be pro-partisan, while the baby-boomers are pro-ideology. "Because we never knew a time as activists when Democrats were the natural ruling party (pre-1994)," 32-year-old Chris Bowers, who blogs at *MyDD*, says via e-mail, "my guess is that we tend to understand the need for partisan-based opposition and new tactics quicker than others."

One of the ideas popular in the immediate wake of Yearly Kos is that the bloggers are now entrenched as another interest group in the party. They brought this on themselves. By taking on the trappings of an interest group—a convention with politicians—they have made themselves an easy target for the label. But Yearly Kos is radically different from, say, an AFL-CIO convention or NARAL meeting, in that finding the precise erogenous zone of the netroots isn't easy, as Warner and others learn. It is heretical to say this in some Democratic circles, but, while the bloggers and their readers are obviously liberal, they aren't like any other party interest group.

There is no single issue that binds them together, and they have no discernable agenda. In fact, the whole phenomenon has overturned the traditional understanding of how groups organize themselves to affect politicians. Tom Schaller, a professor at the University of Maryland who was a front-page blogger on *Daily Kos* in 2004, points out that the cornerstone of interest group theory since 1965, Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action*, holds that small homogenous minorities can usually beat out diffuse, heterogeneous majorities because the cost of organizing for the larger group will always be prohibitive. For example, it's easier for sugar producers to press for higher sugar tariffs than it is for consumers to band together to lower them. "The Internet is partially the answer to this problem," Schaller says. By lowering the costs of organization, the Web has allowed huge numbers of online liberals to organize themselves in

ways that only the labor unions or parties previously could. If the movement continues to grow in size and influence, it will, ironically, limit the power of the Democrats' single-issue groups. In their book, Moulitsas and Armstrong savage the Democrats' interest groups—just as Al From and the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) have done for the last 25 years. Their critique is seeping down into the netroots. In a new poll of MoveOn.org's members, 47 percent agree that "Democrats are too close to single-issue groups, like those that favor gun control, gay rights, or a woman's right to choose."

The attendance at various panels tells the same story. The labor roundtable attracts no more than two or three dozen attendees. Meanwhile, a panel called "Meta Kos"—featuring Moulitsas—attracts hundreds of Yearly Kos attendees (a.k.a. Kossacks). Their talk is not about tax policy or abortion but issues like the outing of Armando. "What happened to Armando is absolutely horrible," says Moulitsas.

Perhaps it's just because the medium is so new, but there are few things the bloggers like talking about more than themselves. In Las Vegas, the medium is the message.

NO POLITICIAN UNDERSTANDS this better than Warner. At least, he thought he did. It's Friday night, and Warner is surrounded by sweaty and boozy bloggers 1,000 feet above the desert in the Stratosphere Hotel's observation tower. Blues Brothers imitators have just finished their set, and Warner grabs their microphone. "This is the new public square!" he shouts. "This is the new face of democracy and the new face of the Democratic Party!" The bloggers cheer, clash drinks, and high-five. The two Blues Brothers outfit Warner in shades and a fedora, and the three of them dance to "Mustang Sally." "Bill Clinton ain't got nothing on this guy!" an impressed Blues Brother—Elwood, I believe—says. A little later, an Iowan begs Warner to take his turn on one of the terrifying thrill rides at the top of the Stratosphere. "He said, 'If you do the ride, you've got my vote,'" Armstrong tells me. "He did the ride."

It sure beats pandering on the issues. Under Armstrong's tutelage, Warner has become one of the more sophisticated 2008 prospects when it comes to seducing the bloggers. He was the first one to agree to attend the convention. He dropped at least \$50,000 on the party. He spoke at the convention the following day and blanketed the ballroom with black Warner t-shirts emblazoned with the Yearly Kos logo. His PAC set up an information booth in the exhibition hall.

And then the whole effort seems to backfire, exposing exactly the new rifts that are on display all weekend—the establishment versus the rank-and-file bloggers; the partisans versus the ideologues. While meeting with a group of bloggers, Warner is confronted by one Edward Anderson, who forces him to fess up to the \$50,000 party tab. "We don't want to join the consultant class," he scolds Warner. On the blogs, the debate over the Stratosphere bash turns

into an opportunity to attack Warner for his views on Iraq and Iran and his association with the DLC. “[A]ll I saw at the Stratosphere was an old-fashioned politician spending something like \$70,000”—the number somehow keeps rising—“on a garish party to soften up a constituency,” Micah Sifry writes on *Personal Democracy Forum*. “If I’m gonna settle for a DLC, I’m going to settle for Hillary,” a *Kos* commenter spits. (Clinton, who chose not to attend, is no doubt enjoying this effortless measure of success.) Moulitsas tried to suppress the uprising with a front-page defense of Warner that only angered his troops even more.

Warner’s reaction to the blogger backlash, which hadn’t fully blossomed when I sat down with him in Las Vegas the afternoon after his now-controversial event, reveals a rather acute appreciation of the blogosphere. He understands that the liberal blogosphere has become an opinion-making force in Democratic politics. For example, the MoveOn.org poll shows that, the more a Democrat reads blogs, the less he or she likes Hillary Clinton, who has pointedly ignored the bloggers. Warner, a DLC centrist who took pains to appoint numerous Republicans in Virginia, seems aware of this phenomenon. “If somebody is going to make the judgment, ‘I don’t like Warner,’” he says, “I want him to make that judgment based not on something that they have read about me—I want them to look me in the eye, let me try to answer their questions, and, if they, at the end of the day, don’t agree, that’s fine. But I’m going to feel like I’ve given them my best shot.”

Warner, who spent 20 years in the high-tech field, understands the blogosphere enough to speak about both its ideological divisions and the split between its opinion-making elite and its grassroots. He tells me that, with his Yearly Kos speech and interviews, he held his own with “some of the more ideological” bloggers, and he suggests that the ice sculpture uprising was more a phenomenon of the rank and file than the blog leadership. “Nobody would have said anything about it that are part of the big bloggers.” With them, “there was a certain sense of, ‘Gosh, this guy respects [our] values.’”

This is certainly more than Bill Richardson knows. When I catch up with him, the New Mexico governor is holding court in a room full of bloggers, endeavoring to understand the phenomenon. The governor seems to have been told that all bloggers are young, one of the mischaracterizations that most angers the bloggers—which is also contradicted by the crowd of middle-aged men before him. He talks about his service in the Clinton administration as taking place “way before many of you were born,” and, when referencing the show “Dallas,” suggests that few in the room would remember the 1980s drama. In frustration, a blogger finally retorts, “We’re as old as you are!”

But, in other ways, Richardson’s naïve style of courtship does charm the masses. Bloggers like the fact that he doesn’t make a keynote speech but simply participates in a panel on an energy policy that the Kossacks have created from scratch. He even endorses the plan, with one amusing

caveat, which only seems to make him more lovable: “One area . . . that I would suggest you do a little more work is in bio-fuels, you know, ethanol.”

His approach to the bloggers is direct, almost guileless. “What do you call your readers, customers?” he innocently asks, which garners some ain’t-he-cute chuckles. He doesn’t beat around the bush about why he’s here: “I’m mainly here to acknowledge that you guys are big players in what voters will do.” It succeeds. By Monday, Moulitsas gives Richardson a smack on the behind and an attaboy, magically adding him to his list of “top candidates to watch.”

General Wesley Clark, who was already on the list, impresses with a similar sense of humility. He throws an expensive party at the Hard Rock Casino, but it is nothing like the epic Stratosphere bash (no sushi, no chocolate fountains, no Elvis impersonators), and so he is spared the attacks that Warner suffers. Moreover, the bloggers, many of whom are self-described geeks, love that Clark attends their science panel. But what is cool for the Kossacks is a little humbling for Clark. Clark’s handler tells a columnist for *Time.com*, “Ten days ago, he had a street named after him in Kosovo; today he’s on a science panel with a man named ‘Darksyde’ and a woman in a bonnet.”

Sadly, Tom Vilsack, governor of Iowa and chair of the DLC, doesn’t make the cut on *Kos*’s top candidate list. Vilsack shares Richardson’s lack of pretension, but he doesn’t combine this man-of-the-people image with the de rigueur pandering or free meals. Instead, like Warner, he’s burdened by DLC baggage, and he gets shoddy results. He sits on a poorly attended education panel with two know-it-all bloggers who dominate much of the session. Afterward, at his meeting with bloggers, 13 people show up, five of them national reporters. “Are you guys bloggers?” he asks of the other eight. During the panel’s Q&A, one of the education panelists, Teacher Ken, interrupts the governor. “Let me respond to his question,” Teacher Ken insists.

Vilsack gives lip service to the transformative power of the Internet on politics, noting the promise of a direct democracy project called the Progressive Caucus, but he also pointedly notes, “There is some maturing that has to take place” in the liberal blogosphere. “I think, in a more mature situation, you would see less focus on the personalities and more on the politics and the policies,” he says. Pressed, he adds, “Well, you know, *Daily Kos* is banging away at the DLC. We don’t need to do that. Because there is a set of values that I think people on *Daily Kos* have that define them as Democrats and a set of values that define me as the chair of the DLC. And you know what? I’m not the enemy. I’m a pretty decent guy, if I say so myself.” Before wrapping up, Vilsack adds, “Al From takes some hits, and, clearly, Joe Lieberman, you know? We don’t need to do that.”

I have never met Vilsack before, and he strikes me as an extremely bright and knowledgeable governor. I almost feel bad for him. I want to—but don’t—explain that, in the liberal blogosphere, he will now be the enemy. ■

BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS Welcome, No. 17

HERE, FOR THE SEVENTEENTH time, comes our annual refreshment: the **HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**. Odd though it may seem to call this festival refreshing—the human rights people deal with human wrongs—nonetheless the festival lifts the spirits in an admittedly parochial way. It is exhilarating to be reminded so persuasively that throughout the world people are making films to address humane concerns.

There is no choice here between art and gravity: these are talented filmmakers. We are not asked for artistic concessions because of their serious subjects. This year's festival includes twenty-four feature films, documentary and fiction, from nineteen countries. I have seen five of the twenty-four, and those films plus experience of the past festivals make me wish that it had been physically possible to see them all. Some notes on those five:

KZ. The director, Rex Bloomstein, is British: his locale is Austria. *KZ* is the German abbreviation for *Konzentrationslager*, or concentration camp (in this case, Mauthausen). Bloomstein's film deploys the terrible essential fact that the world absorbs horror as it moves along, very often transmuting the scene of the horror into a tourist spot. The emollient is time: I once visited Masada in Israel, a scene of multiple (though far fewer) deaths, but they happened in 73 C.E., so they didn't horrify me. The history even lent interest. On the other hand, when I was in Munich in 1967, I was invited to visit nearby Dachau and wouldn't go. Too recent and, in an abstract way, too personal.

KZ is about Mauthausen as a tourist

spot. The expected ironies are all at hand. The town itself, on the banks of the Danube, is pretty—just as it was in Hitler's time—and two kilometers away is the camp. People from all over the world, notably many young people, visit on guided tours. We listen to one of the

HUMAN RIGHTS
WATCH
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

guides explaining to a group what the functions of those showers and those ovens were. We later visit the guide in his home. He is certainly not undisturbed by what he does every day, but thinks it necessary. Still, Bloomstein's film made me

grateful that I had not visited Dachau.

RAIN IN A DRY LAND. The American filmmaker Anne Makepeace treats a recent matter that has been little publicized. In 2004, thirteen thousand Somali Bantu refugees, who had been driven out of their own country by various kinds of violence, were brought from Kenya to America and are now living in fifty different locations around the United States. Makepeace follows two of the Somali families—one in Atlanta, the other in Springfield, Massachusetts—over a period of many months. Their acculturation has few surprises but many pleasures. The film realizes one fantasy of mine. Often, when depressed by shots of barren African villages and harassed villagers, I have wondered what it would be like magically to transport some of those people to air-conditioning and pizza and ice cream. How quickly these factors affect character and transform family problems, not eradicating but altering them. The Springfield family is helped by a Jewish social service, and the sweep of their transformation is underscored by the visits to these recent Somali residents of an amiable Jewish woman.

DÍAS DE SANTIAGO. A fiction film by

Josué Mendez, set in Peru. Santiago is twenty-three, just discharged from the marines, and returns to his family in Lima after several years of fighting terrorists and drug traffickers. After that conjoined experience of violence and discipline, he is now afloat, purposeless. Some of his ex-marine pals plan a bank robbery and invite him to join, but he declines, as much because he thinks the idea stupid as because it is a crime.

He moves through family quarrels and troubles with his wife and his sister-in-law, always with the questions "Why?" and "What?" in his head. Eventually he drives a taxi, but we can't feel that the taxi is all of his future. Mendez delicately makes this blunt-featured, taciturn young man, comprehensively played by Pietro Sibille, the epitome of a being who can't deal with his society, a victim without self-pity.

The film alternates between color and black-and-white. We are told that this is meant to dramatize Santiago's despair. To me it looked like alternating between color and black-and-white.

SOURCE. This documentary by two Czechs, Martin Maraček and Martin Skalský, is set in Azerbaijan. It tells a sadly familiar story in a new setting, a dilemma that keeps growing while the world says "Tsk tsk" and does little. Azerbaijan is one more place where old ways of life are being shriveled by industrial activities.

The very first shot is of a cow grazing in a small patch of grass surrounded by oil wells, giant machinery, and busy desolation. That shot crystallizes the film's subject—we see it again at the end—and the protests and complaints that we see along the way are bitter. British and American oil interests have moved into the local oil fields with little regard for the wishes or the welfare of the locals, most of whom were once farmers. All the problems that resulted from the invasion for oil, social and occupational, are buried (the companies hope) under the pipeline that gushes into Europe.

Matters are complicated by the notoriously corrupt Azerbaijan government, so that the displaced locals get little benefit from the fortunes that are being made.

Some of the men have jobs in the oil fields, of course, but their treatment doesn't fit the fortunes being made. Clips from Soviet films about happy oil-soaked workers in those days contrast with the present—propaganda versus fact.

Few would wish that the oil production stop and the land be returned to farming. But, as usual, few have thought about the boring, bothersome human elements.

THE CAMDEN 28. A touching yet wry bit of nostalgia. On August 22, 1971, in the midst of the Vietnam War, twenty-eight men and women broke into the federal government offices in Camden, New Jersey, seized the records of men eligible for military service, and destroyed them. Two of the group were priests; all were part of what was then called "the Catholic left." All twenty-eight were arrested and

tried, and all were found not guilty because of the FBI's prior knowledge of the raid, which led to the counter-charge of entrapment.

Recently Anthony Giacchino gathered as many of the group as he could and interviewed them. (Spliced into these interviews are, of course, photographs of the speakers and places back then.) All of them remember the event happily, almost gratefully; for many it was a highlight of their lives. Father Michael Doyle, now white-haired, is especially affecting as he relates his participation in the raid to his faith. The very existence of this film, apart from the specifics in it, makes it pertinent today.

The festival is now finishing a two-week engagement at the Walter Reade Theater in New York. Later in the year it will visit some forty American cities. Lucky cities. ■

the most elaborate of his films, *The Winchester Trilogy*, he plunges into the sort of politically tinged reflections on the ills of American society that are sure to make an artist the talk of the seminar rooms in the MFA programs. But Blake's concerns are not art-school calculations. They bubble up from the man's avidities, and are wrapped in a grandly hedonistic feeling for rhythm and texture. The butterfly-wing bursts of mingled colors that are a leitmotif give Blake's work the quickening drama of an unfolding dream.

Blake's DVDs are kinetic collages that mingle film footage, still photography, and painted and digital elements to create layerings and shiftings that feel dance-like, intuitive, impressionistic. The photographic elements—which include fragments of architecture, figures, and faces—will flicker and then burst and then fade. Something familiar—the face of Sam Shepard, a Victorian mansion, a neon sign—will hover for a moment, only to be enveloped in washes of color that move across the screen, saturating or obliterating the photographic images. Blake has a wonderful instinct for keyed-up color. He is not afraid to indulge in burning reds and oranges, in velvety purples and blues. He also understands the possibilities of chiaroscuro, the way that a pinprick of light can suggest distant realms. In these films the rectangular frame is not a passive container but a roving eye. Blake will frequently give us the sense that the frame is a window spinning upward, moving from a terrestrial to a celestial realm. Or he will convince us that that window is whirling around, dancing through the densely overlapping images. I like the suave restlessness of Blake's work. He does not wish to be bored, so his images change very, very fast. The quickening pace brings a certain dispassion—you might call it a caffeinated dispassion—to Blake's whatever-happened-to-the-psychedelic-'60s imagery.

I recognize that some discriminating gallerygoers will be put off by Blake's fondness for technicolor Art Nouveau, and by the soft-core decadence of his themes in *Sodium Fox* and a slightly earlier film, *Reading Ossie Clark*. The cocktail-hour light and the seedy jukebox poetry of *Sodium Fox*—and the stripper who is its shadowy heroine—evoke the hedonism of the 1960s as refracted through the increasingly calculated sexual play of the 1970s. (*Sodium Fox* is a collaboration with David Berman, a poet

JED PERL ON ART

Peep Shows for Poets

I.

EXPERIMENTAL FILM, FOR DECADES a black sheep among the arts, has been winning popularity contests in recent years. The turnaround can seem incredible, at least for anybody old enough to remember the hard pioneering days of avant-garde cinema, when film societies operating on shoestring budgets presented movies on tiny portable screens to minuscule audiences seated uncomfortably on folding chairs. Nowadays, the Dadaist and Surrealist films of Man Ray and Léger are incorporated in the galleries of major museums, where they are given a glitteringly deluxe presentation, playing over and over again in close proximity to masterworks by Picasso and Miró. An upsurge in scholarly studies of mid-twentieth-century culture is bringing increasing attention to the romantic dreamers of American film, figures such as Maya Deren, Kenneth Anger, and Harry Smith. And in the commercial art galleries, which are as likely to show moving images as they are to display paint-

ings or sculptures, all sorts of experiments that not too long ago would have been labeled avant-garde film and supported by a few fanatics are seen by the large numbers of people who make the rounds of the galleries in London and New York and Los Angeles.

There is a splendidly besotted inwardness about the best of the old experimental films, and this peculiar quality, at once megalomaniacal and discrete, has resurfaced in the tantalizingly lovely little movies that are being made by the thirty-four-year-old artist Jeremy

Blake. "A peep show for poets" is what Blake calls *Sodium Fox*, the film that he exhibited at the Feigen Contemporary gallery in New York last fall, and that phrase is perfect for the beautifully crafted scale of Blake's work. Although Blake is an individualist, he is anything but an outsider. His work is saturated with an ultra-fashionable nostalgia for the psychedelic 1960s, and his already extensive resumé includes solo shows at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Reina Sofía in Madrid. In

JEREMY BLAKE
(Feigen Contemporary)

who heads up the rock band Silver Jews.) In *Reading Ossie Clark*, Blake goes to the heart of the giddy art-and-commerce mix of the mid-century years. The voice-over—excerpts from the diaries of Ossie Clark, the fashion designer who was a key figure in Swingin' London—inspires a cascade of visualizations of Carnaby Street fashion, and air travel in the days when airports were still full of romantic promise, and sun-drenched vacation spots, and drugs and rock and roll. Blake doesn't present narratives so much as striking snatches of narrative. The storytelling is disjunctive and surreal, an arabesque of incidents and vantage points.

These brief films, ten or so minutes long, are about the surfaces of a period—but also about how it felt to live inside your skin back then. The two levels are collaged together to create fluid, kaleidoscopic impressions. I jotted down snatches of dialogue from *Sodium Fox*: “My mother was a party animal.” “Cross-eyed from giving too much head.” “Frail cocktail-party hugs.” The whole film suggests a frail cocktail-party hug. Watching *Sodium Fox*, with its twinkling bits of neon and its wavering pop emblems, you take things in easily, as you might at a party where you were just slightly stoned, enough to feel at ease in the role of the cool but nerdy observer. That's Blake: curious, engaged, but not taken in. Clark, whom many people will remember as the dark-haired young man in a famous double portrait by David Hockney, sitting in a chrome-and-cane chair, his bare feet deep in a white shag rug, suffered a ruinous decline. And in *Reading Ossie Clark*, Blake catches the dancing-on-the-edge-of-the-volcano obsessiveness of his life. Yet the mood in the film remains lyrical rather than melancholy. Blake presents Clark's recklessness so imperturbably that the gravity of the situation emerges without exactly being emphasized, a catastrophic pattern glimpsed amid the interlaced emblems and flourishes of the designer's glory days.

What carries Blake beyond the level of the brainy fashionistas is the delicacy of his touch. When he introduces a bit

of crass lounge music, he gives it the elegant sting of an ornament in a harpsichord sonata. And the campy cigarette-smoke whirls of color have deeper resonances, too, evoking the color music of painters from Kandinsky to Morris Louis. There is a fineness to Blake's aestheticism that ultimately registers psychologically, in the subtlety of his portraiture. Although Ossie Clark and Sodium Fox are phantoms, they are beautifully drawn phantoms.

II.

BLAKE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS a painter who works on the computer. In recent years he has also exhibited paintings, works with a turgid photo-realist feel that suggest Elizabeth Peyton's smugly winsome little portraits. In these compositions, which often accompany his new DVDs when they are shown at Feigen Contemporary, Blake recapitulates themes or images from his films, but the results are best passed over in silence. Another aspect of Blake's work has been his collaboration with the movie director Paul Thomas Anderson on *Punch-Drunk Love*, for which he created abstract sequences that suggest the psychological moods of the movie's lovesick protagonist. Blake's contribution here may remind some people of Dalí's collaboration with Hitchcock on *Spellbound*, where the Spanish Surrealist was brought in to give a shape to the dreams that Gregory Peck confided to his beautiful therapist. Blake's work for Anderson is a version of the floating color forms, morphing and shifting like animated technicolor Rorschach tests, that have been an element in all his best work.

Blake's involvement with *Punch-Drunk Love* is the kind of high-art-meets-popular-art interaction that is sure to endear him to the art world fast set, who are only comfortable with ivory towers when they are breaking into them or remodeling them with the help of Gehry or Koolhaas. But if Hollywood wants to kidnap a true aesthete now and again, I say more power to Hollywood, and Blake is the real thing. He is the rare film-maker who has grasped the artistic possibilities inherent in the shift from conventional film to computer technology, and working at his computer he has both revived the artisanal immediacy of early experimental film and taken the measure of our distance from that work.

The individual frames that made up the old reels of film had a way of working against the cinema's promise of absolute fluidity. And in the work of avant-garde film-makers such as Harry Smith and Stan Brakhage, who often created their films frame by frame, painting or otherwise formulating images by hand, the effect could be weirdly—and somehow pleasurably—jittery. Even when experimental film-makers joined together separate stretches of film, the cut-and-paste nature of the process became an element in the final product, lending a constructivist crispness to the flowing imagery of a work such as Ralph Steiner's *H2O* (1929), with its exploration of water in all its aspects. But the particular fluidity of Jeremy Blake's films—a quicksilver quality, outrageously supple and self-confident—could never quite exist without the new computer-generated technology. Much as the invention of flexible tubes for oil paint enabled artists to go outside and tackle new subjects such as dramatic changes in the weather or bustling crowds, so computer technology has enabled Blake to make us feel that painting and photography and the entire history of film are swirling easily together in his cheerfully perfervid imagination.

From time to time, you may still actually hear the whir and clack of an old-fashioned movie projector in an art gallery, where the antiquated technology is meant to exude a dessicated, rescued-from-the-scrap-heap magic. But it is in large measure the advent of new technologies that has brought increased attention to the shadow world of experimental film, and I feel the rising profile of those earlier experiments in Blake's films, where they are re-imagined for the computer age. The ease with which moving images can now be exhibited accounts at least in part for their heightened presence in galleries and museums. And from the point of view of anybody who is interested in the history of the experimental film, the DVD is a boon, providing access to many films that used to exist in relatively few copies and could only be seen in film libraries or at infrequent screenings.

WHILE TECHNOPHILES ARE often far too quick to assume that heightened access equals heightened understanding, access is surely one of the conditions for understanding. *Unseen*

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Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941, a magnificent set of seven DVDs recently issued by Anthology Film Archives, the temple of avant-garde cinema in New York's East Village, will provide the raw materials for many a do-it-yourself revaluation of the history of experimentation in the movies. Some hand-colored footage of a "Butterfly Dance" performed by Annabelle Moore, whose billowing costume is maneuvered to create delicious Art Nouveau patterns, suggests a startling prefiguring of the blots and blurs of color in Blake's film, although I have no reason to believe that Blake was thinking of this footage—or of the more famous films of Loie Fuller performing similar dances in fin-de-siècle Paris.

Unseen Cinema, which was organized by Bruce Posner and runs to some nineteen hours, is an astonishing achievement. The DVDs are presented thematically, although some of the themes are so capacious as to confound their own titles. The most sharply focused, *Picturing a Metropolis: New York City Unveiled*, moves from early footage of the city, including the Edison Company's heart-stoppingly poetic *Coney Island at Night* to Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand's well-known *Manhatta*, to some work by Rudy Burckhardt, the film-maker, photographer, and painter who was also one of de Kooning's earliest friends in New York. *Viva La Dance: The Beginnings of Ciné-Dance* is more variegated but still clearly delimited, opening with Annabelle Moore's "Butterfly Dance" and bringing, near its end, David Bradley's *Peer Gynt* of 1941, starring a teenage Charlton Heston.

What is evident in these selections—and only becomes clearer in the omnium-gatherum DVDs devoted to "new directions in storytelling," "music and abstraction," and "experiments in technique and form"—is how fluid the definition of avant-garde film turns out to be, at least according to the curators at Anthology Film Archives. *Suspense*—a 1913 melodrama in which a housewife and her baby are nearly attacked by a knife-wielding drifter—is included because of its split-screen techniques, but if this silent prefigures a certain kind of art film, it is also a potboiler with a place in the prehistory of the psycho-thrillers we all see at the multiplex. *Unseen Cinema* is a gloriously messy affair, in which Busby Berkeley, everybody's hero of Hollywood high camp, can rub shoulders with

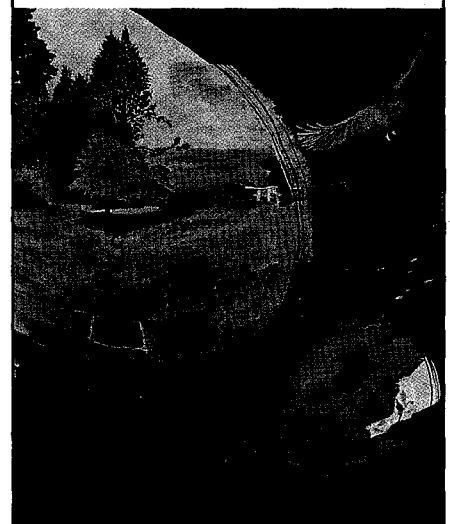
an abstract movie by the utterly high-brow geometric painter and *Partisan Review* editor George L. K. Morris.

The inclusion in *Unseen Cinema* of work by the Edison Company and D.W. Griffith and a host of other people who have secure places in the standard histories of Hollywood suggests that film, a radically new medium around 1900, was once inherently avant-garde. And there is an even larger conclusion that some may want to draw from this anthology, which is that those who explore the possibilities of the moving image are by the very nature of their work members of a permanent avant-garde. Certainly the old idea that avant-gardism is essentially anti-commercial does not make much sense in this context. And if the early Edison films of Coney Island are indeed avant-garde, it is an avant-gardism that depends not on a revaluation of tradition (which most commentators would say is the essence of the thing) but simply on the fundamentalism of the visual impressions, the almost unconscious freshness of the imagery.

This sense of film as automatically or inherently avant-garde, although it is easily contradicted by the numbing banality and conventionality of so much of the history of the movies, remains an idea with a powerful hold among museum curators and art dealers and art critics and art collectors. When Matthew Barney presents his turgid *Cremaster* epic at the Guggenheim or Bill Viola exhibits his slow-motion DVD riffs on gesturing hands in Northern European Renaissance paintings, whatever anybody may say about the work, pro or con, is somehow subsumed in the great fact of its moving-image-ness, which is accepted as itself a triumph of the permanent avant-garde. Indeed, considering the large-scale attention accorded to recent work by Barney and Viola, some commentators will be inclined to say that the very idea of experimental film as a separate category, neither exactly high art nor exactly popular culture, is an outmoded idea, symptomatic of a marginality that no longer describes even the personal film that has been created outside the standard distribution system. In any event, it can be argued that the art world has developed its own distribution systems, which, though not comparable to the scale of the multiplex, are turning Barney and Viola into names with at least the visibility of, say, Jim Jarmusch.

When people used to speak about experimental film or avant-garde film, they were not so much alluding to the restricted audience as they were suggesting the essential spirit of these films—a spirit that was at once quirky, romantic, and megalomaniacal, and that is in danger of being overlooked in the everything-equals-everything-else atmosphere of the contemporary art world. At this moment, strangely enough, the struggle for the heart and soul of experimental film may look a lot like the struggle for the heart and soul of painting or sculpture, for in each case a true feeling for the medium's possibilities depends on having a clear sense of the delimitedness of its means. For all its maddening self-reflexiveness and hopeless obscurantism, experimental film once had a revivifying power, the power of a howling-in-the-wilderness protest against the extent to which cinematic possibilities had been sacrificed to the popularity of the medium. But these days, when it comes to moving images, the art world mostly produces pseudo-avant-garde products engineered to appeal to an ever-growing audience. There is a glibly upscale populism about the work of Barney and Viola and a lot of other artists who are now talked about; they sidestep the high-art prickliness of experimental film while falling far short of the easygoing appeal of Hollywood.

ROSEANNE BACKSTEDT



Birds Crossing Burgundy and Green, 84 x 72 inches, acrylic on unstretched canvas

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What Jeremy Blake regains for the moving image is the unto-oneself lyricism that P. Adams Sitney, in his essential *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde* (1974), credits to “the film-maker behind the camera [who becomes] the first-person protagonist of the film.” “In the lyrical form”—which Sitney identifies as one type of experimental film but I would say is the essence of experimental film—“there is no longer a hero; instead, the screen is filled with movement, and that movement, both of the camera and the editing, reverberates with the idea of a man looking.” In Blake’s films we are responding to precisely this sense of the film-maker as protagonist, who at once looks inward and outward, much as Man Ray did in his short films of the 1920s and Harry Smith did in his ebullient experiments in the 1940s with leaping, floating, quick-changing color. Just as the difficulty of modern poetry can bring us back to the freestanding power of words, so can the difficulty of experimental cinema sometimes force us to look and see in ways that we do not usually look or see on a Saturday night at the movies. After a couple of hours watching short abstract films, even the most intrepid cinemaphile may hunger for a good old-fashioned Hollywood thriller; but the single-mindedness of the experimental film can be clarifying, and like all single-mindedness in the arts, it is an endangered value.

III.

JEREMY BLAKE BRINGS THE GEEKY meticulousness of a techno-craftsman to images of wild abandon. He is walking a tightrope, and it is the sheer nerve of the high-wire act that has enabled him to move, with *The Winchester Trilogy*, into themes that reach further back historically and involve complex questions about the nature of American society. *The Winchester Trilogy* centers on the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose, California, an enormously weird Victorian mansion with some 160 rooms and dozens of staircases and thousands of windows and hundreds of doors, many of which lead nowhere. The house was constructed over a period of decades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by Sarah Winchester, whose husband was the heir to the Winchester rifle fortune. After the untimely deaths of her baby daughter and her husband, Mrs. Winchester consulted a medium who explained that

these tragedies were precipitated by the spirits of people who were killed by Winchester rifles. The only way to deal with these disconsolate spirits, Mrs. Winchester was told, was never to stop building, for the continual construction would somehow confound the spirits who were on her trail.

When I first saw part of Blake’s trilogy—the entire project was exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art last year—I felt a shock of recognition, because I grew up in the Bay Area in the early 1960s, when the Winchester mansion was a decrepit tourist attraction in a deeply depressed San Jose. I was taken there by some San Francisco friends, who were something between latter-day beatniks and proto-hippies, and who adored the Mystery House as an example of American eccentricity, a sort of Northern Californian relative to Watts Towers, the homegrown gothic building in Los Angeles designed by the Italian immigrant Simon Rodia. The wonderfully bizarre mansion and the melancholy palm trees that frame it are a perfect subject for Jeremy Blake’s psychedelic imagination. He understands the mansion in much the same way as those friends of mine in the early ’60s understood it, for the gimcrack aestheticism of the Winchester Mystery House vibrates with a uniquely American mix of mysticism and materialism. And the very site of the mansion turns out to be pregnant with possibilities that link Blake’s interest in spirituality and violence right back to his interest in the movies, for beginning in 1964 three futuristic movie theaters, in circular configurations that suggest spaceships, were built right next to the mansion, and named Century 21, Century 22, and Century 23. This is the kind of stuff you can’t make up.

What is remarkable about Blake’s work in *The Winchester Trilogy* is that he gives the provocative subject matter an unfussy allegorical power. *The Winchester Trilogy* has already inspired two books: a catalogue for the SFMOMA exhibition and Philip Monk’s *Spirit Hunter: The Haunting of American Culture by Myths of Violence: Speculations on Jeremy Blake’s Winchester Trilogy*. Monk, the director of the Art Gallery of York University in Toronto, where the trilogy has also been shown, pushes deep into the iconography of the series, and explores the life of Sarah Winchester, and discusses Blake’s relationship to earlier films. There are moments when I think

that he presses too hard on the trilogy’s relationship to contemporary politics and what he calls an “American administration [that] plays its fearful population.” My problem is not Monk’s view of Bush, it is that the power of *The Winchester Trilogy* has everything to do with the openness of its implications. At his best, though, Monk understands the richness of the film-making, admiring the “shimmering insubstantiality,” the “diminishing flashes of energy,” the “gleaming images that masquerade as figures themselves masquerading the past,” and the “dissipated antique vampires.” He gets at the power of Blake’s films when he observes that in his work “the past and present are locked in one reinforced rhythm.”

The Winchester Trilogy is not a sermon about what’s wrong with America. It is a cinematic poem on certain aspects of America: its extremism, its crankiness, its desperation. The Winchester mansion, a structure that is ordinary in its details but extraordinary when it is considered as a whole, has a way of turning sociological ruminations into lyric flight. That is what Blake loves about the place. His subject is not so much the darkness of America as our love for that darkness—and our desire to illuminate it. When Blake dissolves the Winchester Mansion in the same saturated colors that he uses to illuminate *Sodium Fox* and *Reading Ossie Clark*, some may complain that he is revealing the limitations of his viewpoint. But I think that these are simply the colors that he always sees before his eyes—and it is this intensity of visual feeling that gives *The Winchester Trilogy* its personal stamp, and that earns Blake a place in the lyrical tradition of what Sitney calls “visionary film.”

BLAKE’S SPLASHING COLORS bring to mind the bright surfaces of the 1960s, everything from the rock-concert light shows to the psychedelic posters to the tie-dyed T-shirts. This is a world that Blake, who was born in 1971, quite rightly regards as an ambiguous Eden. The kids who were part of the original counter-culture often had what they imagined were their deepest insights while contemplating themselves in the magnifying mirror of mass culture—a magnifying mirror that Blake certainly admires. To have your first love affair take place during the Summer of Love could feel wildly exhilarating. The danger, of course, was that the public measure of the experience might

become the only measure that mattered; and although the '60s involved a genuine celebration of inwardness and authenticity, what is remembered most clearly is a conformist, culture-by-consensus mentality of which the effects can even now be felt in the intelligentsia's inclination to regard all culture as mass culture. I'm glad to report that Blake understands the 1960s well enough to recognize that the youth culture was not all anti-art or even anti-traditional, and he reminds me of some of the best of the '60s when he invokes the ripe-to-the-point-of-bursting aestheticism that was an aspect of those years. (I have my own memories of '60s aestheticism: I spent many an afternoon in 1968, during my freshman year in college, getting stoned and reading Henry James's late novels, and the drugs had the effect only of heightening the slowed-down intensities and insights in *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*. I have friends who can tell similar tales.)

Blake is far from being the only artist now working with moving images who looks back to mid-century culture in general, and to the movie culture of the '60s and '70s in particular. There are days when I wander through the galleries and get the feeling that there is nothing on anybody's mind except *Last Tango in Paris*, Sergio Leone's westerns, and movies by De Palma, Scorsese, and Coppola. Compared to that trio of movie-

making megalomaniacs, today's art stars generally look like a bunch of wannabes. Their epics are the epics of mini-minds. But not Jeremy Blake. What sets him apart is his feeling for the possibilities that are available only to the solitary film-maker, which are the old possibilities of experimental cinema. He may allude to Leone, but the mid-century movies that his work draws closest to, at least in spirit, are works such as Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, a riotously mystical opium den of a movie, or Harry Smith's great animated fantasia *Heaven and Earth Magic*, with its airy playfulness. Blake evokes the light shows at 1960s rock concerts, but also the luxe of Gallé glass and the primitivism of those early Edison films. The range of allusions is at every point stamped with his individualism.

Jeremy Blake has the clear-sighted cheerfulness of the madman working at the margins. Like every artist who has crafted something with a personal savor, something that can elude the hard-sell tactics of the contemporary art world, he is at once inside tradition and inside himself. That his tradition includes works of which he might be unaware, works as curious and uncanny as the footage of Annabelle Moore in her "Butterfly Dance," reminds us once again that every true tradition is a magnification of modesties. ■

ish" and "meinstein, N: My son, the genius." Many Jews subscribe to a folk theory that attributes Jewish intelligence to what would have to be the weirdest example of sexual selection in the living world: that for generations in the shtetl, the brightest yeshiva boy was betrothed to the daughter of the richest man, thereby favoring the genes, if such genes there are, for Talmudic pilpul.

But pride has always been haunted by fear that public acknowledgment of Jewish achievement could fuel the perception of "Jewish domination" of institutions. And any characterization of Jews in biological terms smacks of Nazi pseudoscience about "the Jewish race." A team of scientists from the University of Utah recently strode into this minefield with their article "Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence," which was published online in the *Journal of Biosocial Science* a year ago, and was soon publicized in *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and on the cover of *New York* magazine.

The Utah researchers Gregory Cochran, Jason Hardy, and Henry Harpending (henceforth CH&H) proposed that Ashkenazi Jews have a genetic advantage in intelligence, and that the advantage arose from natural selection for success in middleman occupations (moneylending, selling, and estate management) during the first millennium of their existence in northern Europe, from about 800 C.E. to 1600 C.E. Since rapid selection of a single trait often brings along deleterious by-products, this evolutionary history also bequeathed the genetic diseases known to be common among Ashkenazim, such as Tay-Sachs and Gaucher's.

The CH&H study quickly became a target of harsh denunciation and morbid fascination. It raises two questions. How good is the evidence for this audacious hypothesis? And what, if any, are the political and moral implications?

THE APPEARANCE OF AN ADVANTAGE in average intelligence among Ashkenazi Jews is easier to establish than its causes. Jews are remarkably over-represented in benchmarks of brainpower. Though never exceeding 3 percent of the American population, Jews account for 37 percent of the winners of the U.S. National Medal

Steven Pinker is Johnstone Family Professor at Harvard. His books include HOW THE MIND WORKS (Norton) and THE BLANK SLATE (Penguin).

Steven Pinker

Groups and Genes

The lessons of the Ashkenazim.

MY GRANDPARENTS WERE immigrants from Eastern Europe who owned a small necktie factory on the outskirts of Montreal. While visiting them one weekend, I found my grandfather on the factory floor, cutting shapes out of irregular stacks of cloth with a fabric saw. He explained that by carving up the remnants that were left over when the neckties had been cut out and stitching them together in places that didn't show, he could get a few extra ties out of each sheet of cloth. I asked him why he was doing this himself

rather than leaving it to his employees. He shrugged, tapped his forehead, and said, "Goyishe kop," a term of condescension that literally means "gentile head."

He wasn't exactly serious, but he wasn't exactly not serious either. Jews have long had an ambivalent attitude toward their own intelligence, and toward their reputation for intelligence. There is an ethnic pride at the prevalence of Jews in occupations that reward brainpower. A droll e-mail called "New Words to Add to Your Jewish Vocabulary" includes "jewishbilation, N: pride in finding out that one's favorite celebrity is Jew-

of Science, 25 percent of the American Nobel Prize winners in literature, 40 percent of the American Nobel Prize winners in science and economics, and so on. On the world stage, we find that 54 percent of the world chess champions have had one or two Jewish parents.

Does this mean that Jews are a nation of *meinsteins*? It does not. Their average IQ has been measured at 108 to 115, one-half to one standard deviation above the mean. But statisticians have long known that a moderate difference in the means of two distributions translates into a large difference at the tails. In the simplest case, if we have two groups of the same size, and the average of Group A exceeds the average of Group B by fifteen IQ points (one standard deviation), then among people with an IQ of 115 or higher the As will outnumber the Bs by a ratio of three to one, but among people with an IQ of 160 or higher the As will outnumber the Bs by a ratio of *forty-two* to one. Even if Group A was a fraction of the size of Group B to begin with, it would contribute a substantial proportion of the people who had the highest scores.

THE CH&H THEORY CAN BE DIVIDED into seven hypotheses. The first is that the Ashkenazi advantage in intelligence is genetic in the first place. Many intellectuals dismiss this possibility out of hand, having been convinced by Stephen Jay Gould's book *The Mismeasure of Man* that general intelligence does not exist and that there is no evidence for its heritability. But a decade ago, the American Psychological Association commissioned an ideologically and racially diverse panel of scientists to review the evidence. They reported that IQ tests measure a stable property of the person; that general intelligence reflects a real phenomenon (namely, that measures of different aspects of intelligence intercorrelate); that it predicts a variety of positive life outcomes; and that it is highly heritable among individuals within a group. This does not imply that differences *between* groups are also genetic, since one group may experience a difference across the board, such as in wealth, discrimination, or social and cultural capital.

The most obvious test of a genetic cause of the Ashkenazi advantage would be a cross-adoption study that measured the adult IQ of children with Ashkenazi biological parents and gentile adoptive parents, and vice versa. No such study

exists, so CH&H's evidence is circumstantial. The Ashkenazi advantage has been found in many decades, countries, and levels of wealth, and the IQ literature shows no well-understood environmental factors capable of producing an advantage of that magnitude.

It remains possible that the advantage is caused by some poorly understood environmental cause. Environmental hypotheses tend to get a free pass in intellectual life, but they must be scrutinized as well. The possibility that Jewish mothers produce smarter children is unlikely in light of abundant evidence that families have no lasting effect on intelligence. Siblings reared together are no more correlated in IQ than siblings who were separated at birth, and adopted siblings are not correlated at all. Growing up in a given home within a culture seems to leave no lasting stamp on intelligence.

But parents are just one aspect of the environment, and the cultural milieu is surely more important. Yet it cannot be taken for granted that Jewish culture favors achievement in physics, philosophy, or chess. In his autobiography, the eminent social psychologist Stanley Schachter wrote that

I went to Yale much against my father's wishes. He couldn't have cared less about higher education and wanted me to go to a one-year laundry college (no kidding) out in the Midwest and join him then in the family business. I never have understood what this intellectually driven Jewish immigrant business is all about. It wasn't true of my family, and I know very few families for which it was true. . . . To me, Jewish love of learning has always seemed a myth perpetrated by a few rabbis' sons who weren't good at anything much but going to school and then spending the rest of their lives writing novels about it.

Also worth remembering is the saying that if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. Mere expectations cannot produce a brilliant mind. So an environmental explanation of the Ashkenazi advantage in intelligence is also unproven, though it certainly cannot be ruled out.

THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS IS that Ashkenazim tended to marry their own during most of their formative history. This is

necessary, because natural selection cannot change the genetic composition of a population if new genes are constantly flowing in from the neighbors and diluting its effects. CH&H cite the Jewish traditions of avoiding intermarriage, proselytization, or conquest. They mention historical accounts attesting that intermarriage was indeed rare, and genetic evidence pointing to an admixture of about 0.5 to 1 percent of neighboring genes per generation. Note that over many centuries this is enough to make Ashkenazim genetically similar to their European neighbors, so the notion of a distinct "Jewish race" is indeed nonsense. But the two populations are not identical: the genetic overlap due to interbreeding is around one-third to one-half, depending on which genes you look at.

The third hypothesis is that Ashkenazim were concentrated in mercantile, managerial, and financial occupations at a time when their neighbors were likely to be peasant farmers, craftsmen, or soldiers. Jews presumably had an accidental head start in these occupations because of their religious obligation of literacy, their ability to network with one another across far-flung communities, and their role as a go-between amid Christian and Islamic civilizations. In the Middle Ages they were funneled into middlemen professions by their exclusion from guilds, their inability to own land, and the niche opened up by the Christian prohibition of usury. CH&H cite historians who have documented that a majority of Jews were middlemen during the Middle Ages, many of them moneylenders.

The fourth hypothesis is that in traditional Ashkenazi occupations higher intelligence led to greater economic success. CH&H cite contemporary data that IQ predicts income and occupational success in every profession, and that the minimum IQ requirements for financial and managerial occupations are higher than those for farming, crafts, and the military. Presumably, numeracy, verbal skill, problem solving, and social intelligence are invaluable in calculating slim profits and interest rates, in assessing creditworthiness, in anticipating trends, and in meeting other cognitive demands of the middleman niche. Cultural historians have noticed that these skills seem to be cultivated among contemporary middleman minorities.

The fifth hypothesis is that richer people had more surviving children during the centuries in which Ashkenazim

were middlemen. Today the wealthy tend to have fewer children, but before the demographic transition (which began with the industrial revolution) wealth brought better nutrition and healthier surroundings, and hence more children who survived to adulthood. CH&H cite historians who made this point about the Ashkenazim in particular.

THE SIXTH HYPOTHESIS IS THAT the common Ashkenazi diseases are a product of natural selection rather than genetic drift, the other mechanism of evolutionary change. In any finite population, some genes can go extinct and others can take over the population by sheer chance. Imagine an island on which a lightning bolt happened to kill everyone but the redheads; the descendants would found a redheaded race, despite the lack of any advantage to redheadedness. As the example suggests, drift is most potent in small populations. It can leave a genetic stamp on an inbred community that was founded by a small number of pioneers, or that suffered a bottleneck in population size and subsequently rebounded, multiplying copies of whatever genes were possessed by the few lucky survivors.

Most medical geneticists believe that drift is to blame for Ashkenazic genetic diseases. CH&H respond with two lines of evidence, based on the logic that drift affects all genes equally, be they advantageous, neutral, or deleterious. Bottlenecks tend to reduce heterozygosity, or the state of having different versions of a gene from one's mother and father. That is because if only a few ancestors were around at some point in the past, they would have had fewer gene variants to leave to their descendants, increasing the chance that a gene would meet a copy of itself when a couple conceives a child. CH&H adduce evidence that Ashkenazim, unlike other small populations, have degrees of heterozygosity similar to their more numerous European neighbors. They also suggest that Ashkenazim have a distribution of neutral genes similar to that of Europeans in general. A problem in evaluating this hypothesis is that arguments for and against genetic bottlenecks are often sensitive to assumptions built into the models, and we can expect CH&H to be debating their critics for some time.

Perhaps the most interesting biological fact addressed by CH&H is that Ash-

kenazi genetic diseases tend to cluster in a small number of metabolic pathways. Genes involved in different stages of a single biochemical assembly line are often scattered throughout the genome. The presence of mutations in a set of these genes is a fingerprint of natural selection, because the only common denominator is their effect on the organism, which is what selection, and selection alone, can "see." Random drift is unlikely to collect genes scattered hither and yon that just happen to take part in the same biochemical process.

It has long been known that Ashkenazi diseases cluster in groups with a common metabolic pathway. They include disorders of storing sphingolipids ("sphinx-like fats"), such as Tay-Sachs and Gaucher's, and disorders of DNA repair, including the BRCA1 gene, which increases the odds of breast cancer. Using a functional genomic database, CH&H try to calculate the a priori probability that these clusterings could have arisen at random, and dismiss it as infinitesimal.

THE SEVENTH AND REALLY PIVOTAL hypothesis is that the common Ashkenazi diseases are by-products of genes that were selected because they enhance intelligence. The alternative is that they were selected for something else, such as resistance to infectious disease. CH&H discount disease resistance for most of the genes in question because the genes are not shared by other Europeans, who must have been victims of the same germs.

Harmful genetic by-products can arise in two major ways. In heterozygote advantage, a gene confers an advantage on possessors of *one* copy (heterozygotes or carriers), which outweighs the disadvantage it encumbers on possessors of *two* copies (homozygotes). The best-known example is the sickle cell gene, prevalent in malaria-ridden parts of Africa, which leads to malaria resistance in homozygotes but to anemia in heterozygotes. CH&H suggest that a similar trade-off could have produced the Ashkenazi diseases, though the evidence is paltry. They note that increased levels of sphingolipids foster neural growth in developing rodent brains, and that the normal version of the BRCA1 gene inhibits neural growth; but that is a long way from human intelligence.

The other kind of by-product comes from antagonistic pleiotropy: a single

copy of a gene has multiple effects, the good ones outweighing the bad ones on average. The evidence here is a bit better. People with the genes for torsion dystonia, non-classical congenital adrenal hyperplasia, and Gaucher's disease tend to have higher average IQs, or tend to be concentrated in professions such as physics and engineering. But the numbers are small.

So the evidence that Ashkenazi disease genes boost intelligence is extremely iffy. Still, the hypothesis is testable: compare the IQs in a large sample of sibling pairs, one of whom is a carrier of a disease gene, the other a non-carrier. If the carriers are not smarter, the hypothesis is wrong. The study could easily be done in Israel, with its centralized records of health care, education, and military service.

CH&H, THEN, HAVE PROVIDED prima facie evidence for each of the hypotheses making up their theory. But all the hypotheses would have to be true for the theory as a whole to be true—and much of the evidence is circumstantial, and the pivotal hypothesis is the one for which they have the least evidence. Yet that hypothesis is also the most easily falsifiable. By that criterion, the CH&H story meets the standards of a good scientific theory, though it is tentative and could turn out to be mistaken.

But is it good for the Jews? More to the point, is it good for ideals of tolerance and ethnic amity? On one interpretation, perhaps it is. Jewish achievement is obvious; only the explanation is unclear. The idea of innate Jewish intelligence is certainly an improvement over the infamous alternative generalization, a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. And attention to the talents needed in the middleman niche (whether they are biological or cultural) could benefit other middleman minorities, such as Armenians, Lebanese, Ibos, and overseas Chinese and Indians, who have also been targets of vicious persecution because of their economic success.

And yet the dangers are real. Like intelligence, personality traits are measurable, heritable within a group, and slightly different, on average, between groups. Someday someone could test whether there was selection for personality traits that are conducive to success in money-lending and mercantilism, traits that I will leave to the reader's imagination. One

can also imagine how a finding of this kind would be interpreted in, say, Cairo, Tehran, and Kuala Lumpur. And the CH&H study could lower people's resistance to more invidious comparisons, such as groups who historically score lower, rather than higher, on IQ tests.

What can be done? In recent decades, the standard response to claims of genetic differences has been to deny the existence of intelligence, to deny the existence of races and other genetic groupings, and to subject proponents to vilification, censorship, and at times physical intimidation. Aside from its effects on liberal discourse, the response is problematic. Reality is what refuses to go away when you do not believe in it, and progress in neuroscience and genomics has made these politically comforting shibboleths (such as the non-existence of intelligence and the non-existence of race) untenable.

Rather than legislating facts, could we adopt a policy of agnosticism, and recommend that we "don't go there"? Scientists routinely avoid research that may have harmful consequences, such as injuring human subjects or releasing dangerous microorganisms. The problem with this line of thought is that it would restrict research based on its intellectual content rather than on its physical conduct. Ideas are connected to other ideas, often in unanticipated ways, and restrictions on content could cripple freedom of inquiry and distort the intellectual landscape.

Also, there are positive reasons to study the genetics of groups. Until the day that every person is issued a CD containing his or her genome, medicine will need the statistical boost of data on group differences when targeting tests and treatments to those most likely to benefit from them. Remember that the CH&H study grew out of research aimed at reducing the enormous suffering caused by genetic diseases. Many have effects on the nervous and endocrine systems, and connections with the psychological traits of sufferers and carriers may be unavoidable. And of course the tests could refute claims of group differences as easily as they could confirm them.

The genetics of groups is also an exciting frontier in the study of history. Many Jews have been thrilled by the discoveries of a common Y-chromosome among many of today's kohanim (believed to be descendants of the priestly

caste in ancient Judea, who were themselves the descendants of Aaron), of genetic commonalities between the Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews traceable to a common ancestry in the Middle East, and of the presence of these genes in isolated communities in Africa and Asia that retain some Jewish rituals. Studies of the genes of African, American, and Australian populations could shed light on their prehistory, filling in pages that are sadly missing from the history of our species, as well as enlightening curious individuals about their genealogy.

In theory, we have the intellectual and moral tools to defuse the dangers. "Is" does not imply "ought." Group differences, when they exist, pertain to averages, not to individual men and women. There are geniuses and dullards, saints and sinners, in every race, ethnicity, and gender. Political equality is a commitment to universal human rights, and to policies that treat people as individuals rather than as representatives of groups;

it is not an empirical claim that people are indistinguishable. Many commentators seem unwilling to grasp these points.

The revolution in human genomics has spawned profuse commentary about the perils of cloning and human genetic enhancement. But these fears may be misplaced. When people realize that cloning is just forging a genetically unique child for an identical twin of one of the parents, rather than resurrecting a soul or investing in an organ farm, I suspect no one will want to do it. And when they realize that most genes have costs as well as benefits (a gene might raise a child's IQ but also predispose him to a genetic disease), "designer babies" will lose whatever appeal they have. In contrast, the power to uncover genetic and evolutionary roots of group differences in psychological traits is both more likely to materialize and more incendiary in its consequences. And it is a prospect that we are, intellectually and emotionally, very poorly equipped to confront. ■

Martha C. Nussbaum Man Overboard

MANLINESS

By Harvey C. Mansfield

(Yale University Press, 289 pp., \$27.50)

I.

SUPPOSE A PHILOSOPHICAL scholar—let us call this scholar S—with high standards, trained in and fond of the works of Plato and Aristotle, wished to investigate, for a contemporary American audience, the concept of "manliness," a concept closely related to the one that Plato and Aristotle called *andreia*, for which the usual English rendering is "courage." (Harvey Mansfield himself tells us that *andreia* is his subject.) How would this scholar go about it? Well, following the lead of Aristotle, S would probably begin by laying out the various widespread beliefs about the topic, especially those held by reputable people. S would also consider the opinions of well-known philosophers. In setting down all these opinions, S would be careful to get people's views right and to read their writings carefully, looking not just for

assertions but also for the arguments that support them.

Inevitably this welter of opinions would contain contradictions—not just between one thinker and another, but also within the utterances of a single thinker. People are amazingly able to live with contradictions, since most people do not stop to sort these matters out in the way that Socrates recommended. People also use terms imprecisely and ambiguously, so S's inquiry would uncover much fuzziness and equivocation. Nor do most people most of the time, when they make statements of the form "Manliness is X," pause to tell us whether they mean to say that X is a necessary condition of manliness, or a sufficient condition, or both, or neither. So S would have to sort all this out, too. ("Don't use your femi-

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nine logic on me," I can already hear my partner saying teasingly in the background, as he typically does when words such as "necessary condition" are wheeled onto the stage.)

Carefully, S would set out the puzzles, untangling opinions like tangled strands of yarn. (Women do so well at logic, says Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, because they have all that experience detangling and delousing, whereas men, who are impatient creatures, just like to wave their shields around.) Finally S would try to produce an account that seemed to be the best one, preserving the deepest and most basic of the opinions, and discarding those that contradict them. S would then hold this definition out publicly, inviting all comers to try things out with their own reasoning, and then accept the proposed definition or improve upon it.

Being a friend of the Greeks, S would naturally have curiosity about the cross-cultural aspects of this particular topic. It is evident that Athenians of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. had rather different ideas about manliness from those of modern Americans. A lot of them thought that manliness naturally expressed itself in a preference for young men over women as sexual partners, and that the most manly of the gods, Zeus and Poseidon, enjoyed such lovers. Most Americans, even if they grudgingly grant that men in same-sex relationships are potentially manly, would shrink at the thought that Jesus or Jehovah had any such inclinations. Many Athenians, moreover, and even more Spartans thought that erotic attraction between males was a fine cement for a military combat unit—something that the American military is so far from thinking that it would rather not think anything at all about the topic. So S would investigate these differences, and these would naturally lead S to the copious cross-cultural literature on manliness that by now exists: to the work of, say, Daniel Boyarin, on how Jewish males refashioned Roman norms of manliness, making the astonishing claim that the true man sits still all day with a book, and has the bodily shape of someone who does just that; or to work on Indian conceptions of manliness, contrasting the sensuous Krishna, playing his flute, with the tougher norms of manliness recommended by the Raj. A scholar with S's curiosity and love of truth would find in this material rich food for reflection.

HARVEY MANSFIELD'S CREDENTIALS suggest to the reader that he will behave like S. He is a prominent political philosopher, recently retired from a chair at Harvard University, who has written widely about philosophical texts. He regularly taught a well-known class in the classics of Greek political thought. By his own account, the works of Plato and Aristotle are particularly important to him. Moreover, Mansfield has become famous as a defender of high academic standards and an opponent of "grade inflation." He likes to excoriate his faculty colleagues for their alleged laxness and looseness.

It quickly becomes evident, however, that *Manliness* is not the book that our imagined S would have written. To begin with, it is slipshod about facts—even the facts that lie at the heart of his argument. He repeatedly tells us that "all previous societies have been ruled by males," producing Margaret Thatcher as a sole recent exception. Well, one has to forgive Mansfield for not adducing Angela Merkel or Han Myung-Sook or Michelle Bachelet, since these female leaders won their posts, presumably, after his book went to press. One might even forgive Mansfield for not knowing about female heads of state in Mongolia, Argentina, Iceland, Latvia, Rwanda, Finland, Burundi, Bermuda, Mozambique, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Dominica, Malta, Liberia, and Bangladesh. Those are relatively small countries, and one would have to be curious about what is going on in them. But one can hardly overlook Mansfield's neglect of the very newsworthy recent or current female leaders of New Zealand (Jenny Shipley, Helen Clark), Turkey (Tansu Ciller), Poland (Hanna Suchocka), Norway (Gro Harlem Brundtland), France (Edith Cresson), Canada (Kim Campbell), Sri Lanka (Sirimavo Bandaranaike, and now her daughter), the Philippines (Corazon Aquino, Gloria Arroyo), and Pakistan (Benazir Bhutto, a government major at Harvard who might have taken Mansfield's class). And what might one say about Mansfield's utter neglect of Indira Gandhi and Golda Meir, two of the most influential politicians of the twentieth century? Don't we have to think, in the face of these cases, that his assertions are some sort of elaborate charade, a pretense that the world is the way some audience would like it to be, whether it is that way or not?

So Mansfield is not overly concerned with fact. A few minutes on Google would have made these facts available to a minimally inquiring mind. Is he, then, at least concerned with logic? Only if his concern is to demonstrate, boldly, his disdain for it. After being confronted with a bewildering range of attributes of manliness—confidence, aggressiveness, protectiveness, independence, ability to command, eagerness to feel important, love of attention—we think that we are finally getting somewhere when Mansfield announces that his own definition of manliness is "confidence in the face of risk." We might have some issues with the proposal. Don't brave people often feel afraid? Aristotle thinks they do, and rightly, for the loss of life is especially painful when one has a good life. And what about risk? Doesn't manliness also come into play in facing the inevitable, such as each person's own death? And what sort of risk? Are we talking about the physical realm or the moral realm? Barry Bonds has a lot of physical confidence while being (apparently) a moral coward. Socrates probably wasn't up to much furniture-moving, and Seneca is always whining about his stomach problems; but both had the confidence that counts morally, when they stood up to unjust governments and went to their deaths. So the candidate definition—"confidence in the face of risk"—needs to answer a lot of questions. But at least it is something, a definite proposal from which we can move forward.

IMAGINE THE SHOCK TO THE FEMINE logic-loving mind, then, when within two pages the definition is, if not withdrawn, at least ignored, and quite different formulations, inconsistent with it, trot forward like eager children vying for attention. Manliness is aggressiveness, combined with promiscuous-

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ness in sex. It is the "brute spirit of aggression." It is not mere aggression, but only "aggression that develops a cause it espouses." It is "a claim on your attention." It is the "willingness to challenge nature combined with confidence... that one can succeed." "In the end aggression is all there is." It is "stubbornness added to rationality."

Mansfield does tell us that his definition will shift as he moves, in later chapters, "from aggression to philosophical courage." But these examples are all quite close together in the early portion of the text; and the later chapters do not supply a new, coherent, contradiction-free account. Things do not get better, then. Philosophers get mentioned more often, but are never emulated. We never find Mansfield even worrying about his mass of contradictions or trying to clean up the account. On the logical principle that from a contradiction everything and anything follows, I conclude that *Manliness* says it all. Try that out on the back jacket.

AS FOR THE CAREFUL READING of other thinkers' works that our friend S would recommend, such reading is nowhere to be found in these pages. Mansfield is horrendous when he reads feminist thinkers. He gives us a hasty, superficial summary of several bits of some early works (de Beauvoir, Millett, Greer, Firestone), but absolutely no sense of how any of these women argues, and no sense of what the women's movement has produced since the early 1970s. (Curious references to Carol Gilligan and to an exchange between Judith Butler and Seyla Benhabib do not tell us anything about the framework of their ideas.) Susan Okin is mentioned once in the text, and Andrea Dworkin is ignored altogether. (Catherine MacKinnon turns up in the bibliography.) By such strategic omissions, Mansfield is able to hoodwink his implied reader into thinking that all feminists want to have a lot of sex without commitment, and that they ignore or denounce the family, and that they "do not worry about violence in sex, and they do not refer to the respect in which one should hold one's partner." This last is the most extraordinary claim of all. If any topics could be said to be absolute clichés of modern feminist thought, they

Eye of the Storm, Pescadero Coast

The same shirt pulled over the same head not once but again and again, the eucalyptus turned inside out. Brutal, foam-white,

the sea tore at its rocky coast. Route One was forsaken. The big house was dark, the plowed yard a pool of rain. A cloud ceiling

pressed yet lower. Along worn cliffs in the farm workers' small-windowed shacks, stoves burned into the dark of the day.

It was Sunday. Only the storm made it Sabbath. In flooded fields, unharvested brussels sprouts clung to their stalks.

CHRISTINA HUTCHINS

would be the topics of sexual violence and sexual respect (treating a person as a person instead of as an object).

But never mind. It turns out that Mansfield is an equal opportunity misreader. Male philosophers get the same slipshod treatment. To mention a typical example, Mansfield evidently believes, and asserts with high-spirited glee, that for him to require the reading of Mill's *On Liberty* in his class at Harvard, a private university, is "contrary to [the work's] main thesis." He seems to think that Mill's "harm principle" supplies limits on all human conduct, not just on the legal regulation of conduct: nobody can require anything of anyone, including the young, unless that person is harming others. This "reading" flies so flatly in the face of Mill's elaborate views about education, not to mention the plain meaning of the text of the fourth chapter of *On Liberty*, that one thinks with distress of this jokey aside being retailed to pseudo-knowing undergraduates almost as another example of manliness: "See? I can teach Mill as a required text, thus showing that I have contempt for his main idea."

Indeed, when we compare Mansfield to our decent-if-not-very-flashy S, it seems appalling that Mansfield has spent decades teaching great philosophical texts to undergraduates who cannot easily tell a careful reading from a careless one, or low standards from high ones—especially when the teacher keeps portraying himself as the bold defender of

standards. Undergraduates typically take a while to learn to analyze the arguments in Plato logically and to care about things like validity, ambiguity, and contradiction. Many of them, then, will not notice how riddled with logical error and verbal ambiguity their teacher's pronouncements are. That is the sort of thing that they are in class to learn. But surely other, older people know. How did someone whose every paragraph is a stake in Socrates's heart come to be an exemplar of philosophical seriousness?

IF THE AUTHOR OF *MANLINESS* is far from being the patient philosophical type for whom we have been searching, who might he be? Plato's dialogues knew the answer: he is a rhetorician or a sophist, one of

those theatrical types so admired by the conventionally ambitious men amply on display as Socrates's interlocutors. Far from seeking truth, the sophist seeks to put on a good show. Far from wanting premises that are correct, the sophist seeks premises that his chosen audience will find believable. Far from seeking analytical rigor, he offers a show of rigor in arguments that are riddled with ambiguity and equivocation and logical error. Far from submitting bravely to Socrates's questioning, he slinks away when the going gets tough, or cranks up the volume in order to try to drown out the courageous voice of the truth-seeking philosopher. Audiences love him—because, says Socrates, he is like a clever cook: instead of promoting true health, he goes after what his audience will eagerly gobble up.

That is Mansfield to a T. In this book that repeatedly proclaims its own manly boldness, offering its author as a John Wayne of the intellect, he serves up a concoction that is contrived mainly to delight the conservative audience that already lionizes Mansfield as the hero of high standards, the enemy of grade inflation, and the foe of feminism. Mansfield's daring physical prowess, he told a *New York Times Magazine* reporter, is displayed in his ability to move furniture around his house. His daring moral prowess is displayed in his ability to make speeches on the floor of the Harvard faculty opposing the creation of a women's studies program, a risky feat indeed. Should average readers wonder

whether this does indeed bring him into competition with John Wayne, or even with the questionable Barry Bonds, Mansfield does not care an iota, because he has his expected audience dead to rights. Readers of *The Weekly Standard* and *National Review*, they are already devouring the logic-free, ambiguity-riddled concoction he has served up and smacking their lips.

Mansfield's intended readers do not care what modern feminism really says, and they know so little about the subject that they are likely not even to see how little of it Mansfield has described. From their youth they remember the chilling names of Millett, Greer, and Firestone, and they are sure that feminism cannot have had a thought since then. They certainly relish the tasty claim that sexual promiscuity is a central goal of the new feminism. And just to be sure that they are utterly delighted, Mansfield smears all over the top of his dish a thick layer of sneers and jibes, rather like anchovy paste, delicious to some but revolting to others—patronizing characterizations of women as harboring a “secret liking for housework,” or enjoying “the pleasurable duty of henpecking.” Or this: “One has only to think of Jane Austen to be assured that women have a sense of humor, distributed in lesser quantities to lesser brains.” At this point, I think, even some of the implied readers of this book might turn away. In fact, I suspect that Mansfield underestimates the care and the acuity of his chosen audience (or some of it) throughout his book.

II.

MANSFIELD'S ASSERTIONS (I cannot quite call them arguments) seem to be as follows. Manliness, the quality of which John Wayne (says Mansfield) is the quintessential embodiment, is a characteristic that societies rightly value. But modern feminism wants a society that has effaced all distinctions of gender, a society in which men and women have the same traits. This is a dangerous mistake, because manly aggression, though not altogether reliable, supplies something without which we cannot have a good or stable society. (Mansfield connects manliness not only to military performance but also to the ability to govern a nation, and, as we have seen, he denies that women who are not Mrs. Thatcher have this trait.) Since women

are only rarely capable of manliness, a society in which both sexes have the same traits will have to be lacking in manliness. We should reject this aim, and, with it, modern feminism.

The second half of the book contains, as Mansfield has warned his reader, a more complex set of assertions, though they all lead to the same bottom line. Taking Theodore Roosevelt as his more complex icon of manliness, Mansfield notes that traditional John Wayne-style manliness is not necessarily combined with virtue. Indeed, traditional manliness is often linked to a Nietzschean sort of “nihilism,” which accepts no restraints and desires to soar “beyond good and evil.” (This reading of Nietzsche, like so many readings in the book, is not defended by any close look at an actual text. Is this the Nietzsche who prizes the disciplined virtue of the dancer, who teaches that *laissez aller*, the absence of restraint, is incompatible with any great achievement of any sort?) Theodore Roosevelt, though, did combine traditional manliness with virtue, thus showing that it is both possible and valuable to do so.

On the whole, however, men will allow the constraints of virtue to drag down their manly flights only if women insist on virtue as a condition of sex. So women's non-manly inclinations hold men in check. This old saw, which one encounters over and over again in the writings of Leo Strauss's followers, seems to derive not from a realistic look at life but from an opportunistic reading of Rousseau's *Émile*, minus all Rousseau's complexity and nuance. Rousseau shows clearly that the difference between *Émile* and *Sophie* is produced by a coercive regime that curbs *Sophie*'s intelligence and even her physical prowess—she would have beaten *Émile* in the race had she not had to run in those absurd clothes. He also demonstrated, in his unpublished conclusion to the *Émile-Sophie* story, that a marriage so contracted would be a dismal failure, since parties so utterly distinct in moral upbringing would be totally unable to understand one another.

But back to feminism. Feminism (exemplified in Mansfield's book by a few carefully selected bits of early 1970s authors) wants women to reject virtue and to seek sexual satisfaction promiscuously. In effect, it teaches women to be as “nihilistic” as men. But women are doomed to dismal failure at this task, because

their manliness is puny. Meanwhile, they will lose the hold they once had on men through modesty and virtue. They will therefore be more endangered: Mansfield actually asserts that a woman can resist rape only with the aid of “a certain ladylike modesty enabling her to take offense at unwanted encroachment”! (How does he handle the well-known fact that a large proportion of rapes are committed by men with whom the victim has already had an intimate relationship, or with whom she currently has one?) Society, meanwhile, will come to grief. So, once again, the lesson is that we ought to rid ourselves of feminism.

WHERE TO BEGIN? SINCE IN Mansfield all roads lead back to the bogey of feminism, let us begin there. Modern feminism is a hugely diverse set of positions and arguments, but almost nobody has seriously suggested that gender distinctions ought to be completely eradicated. Indeed, much of the effort of legal feminism has been to get the law to take them seriously enough. Thus feminists have urged that rape law take cognizance of women's unequal and asymmetrical physical vulnerability. Some courts had refused to convict men of rape if the woman did not fight her attacker. In one recent Illinois case, the conviction was tossed out because the woman, about five feet tall and less than one hundred pounds, did not resist a two-hundred-pound attacker in a solitary forest preserve. But in a situation of great physical asymmetry, feminists have urged, fighting is actually a stupid thing to do, and in the Illinois case even crying out “No!” would have been stupid, given the extreme solitude of the place and the likelihood that shouting would provoke the attacker to violence. (I take this example from the feminist legal scholar Stephen Schulhofer. Mansfield utterly ignores the existence of male feminists, though they are many. Feminism is a concern with justice, not an exercise in identity politics.)

Feminists have also taken exception when insurance companies refused to offer pregnancy benefits and then claimed that they were not discriminating, because their policies protected all “non-pregnant persons” and refused to protect “pregnant persons,” male and female. Catharine MacKinnon made the valuable observation that sameness of treatment is not enough for the truly “equal

protection of the laws," when there are underlying physical asymmetries that significantly affect women's social functioning. The "equal protection of the laws" requires, instead, that society dismantle regimes of hierarchy and subordination. MacKinnon's strategy was based upon existing law in the area of race. Laws against miscegenation had been defended on the ground that they treat everyone alike: blacks cannot marry whites and whites cannot marry blacks. Yet the Supreme Court held that these laws violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, because they uphold and perpetuate "white supremacy." The denial of pregnancy benefits, MacKinnon argued, was like that, a regime of male supremacy. The refusal to offer pregnancy benefits is now seen as a form of sex discrimination, thanks to feminist argument.

FEMINISTS, THEN, HAVE NOT TYPICALLY sought a society in which there are no gender distinctions. They have challenged imposed and unchosen gender norms that interfere with women's freedom and functioning—seeking clothing, for example, in which one can do what one wants to do and is capable of doing (not like Sophie's absurd doll clothes). Anne Hollander has written eloquently of the way in which women have claimed the suit, that attribute of the successful man the world over, as their own, replacing with it those billowing petticoats that made women seem vaguely like mermaids, human on top and some hidden uncleanness below. But women's suits never have been and never will be precisely like men's suits—perhaps because women have better fashion sense, perhaps because colorblindness is a male-sex-linked gene.

What feminists have sought above all is a society in which there are no sex-based hierarchies, in which the sheer luck of being born a female does not slot one into an inferior category for the purposes of basic political and social functioning. Just as society now refuses to discriminate on grounds of religion and race, so too it should refuse to discriminate on grounds of sex.

If we now consider the example of religion, we can easily see that non-discrimination does not entail homogeneity. Indeed, the connection, if any, works in the opposite direction. Precisely because the United States does not have an established church, and refuses to discriminate

politically on grounds of religious membership, people are extremely free to choose any religion they want, to make one up if they want to, or to have none if they want none. Wherever political privileges are attached to religious membership, this freedom, even if nominally protected, is not total: most people want to be in the dominant group, so it is not surprising that there are lots of Protestants in officially Protestant nations, and so forth. What makes the United States the most religiously diverse and colorful nation in the world (perhaps in company with India) is its firm commitment to non-discrimination (which it also shares with India). Go and convert to Buddhism if you want, or to the newest sect of Pentacostalism. Be a Jew and do not feel pressure to convert to Christianity, as Jews always did in Establishmentarian Europe. Your political privileges will not be affected by your religious choices.

What non-discrimination means for gender difference is not yet clear, because people have only begun to experience non-discrimination. Using the religion analogy, however, we might predict that once gender is no longer a source of hierarchy and subordination, people will express themselves more and more personally where gender is concerned. Even now, some women wear skirts and others feel more comfortable in pants. Some wear their hair very short and others very long. More and more, form follows function. Women's athletic clothes are not the same as men's athletic clothes; gone are the bad old days when female runners had to wear an ill-fitting garment designed for the male torso. But they are suited to running, which is what matters here; and the same garment is not suited to the office (whereas Sophie had to wear her modest housewifely clothes for running and studying and flirting alike).

In sum, when people are not forced, their choices make sense for them and the lives they want to lead. So, too, in relationships: some women will choose flirtiness, others a "manly" directness. Some men will like taking care of children (if government and employers give them decent support); others will try to avoid care, and women will be able, let us hope, to see that one coming in advance and make the choices they want to make in response. Some women will attach great importance to their identity as women (as some African Americans attach great importance to that identity),

and others will care less. What really troubles Mansfield, I fear, is personal liberty itself, and the diversity that a culture of personal self-expression, fostered by non-discrimination, brings with it.

III.

BUT WHAT ABOUT MANLINESS? Do we want John Waynes around, or don't we? Manliness, all of Mansfield's singulars and abstractions notwithstanding, is clearly not a single trait. It is a family of traits: upper-body strength, aggressiveness (and there are many forms of that), physical endurance, mental endurance, physical courage, moral courage, and probably many more. Barry Bonds might be said by many to be "manly," but if we are thinking of the Gary Cooper of *High Noon* as our paradigm, we will find Bonds quite unmanly. When the Chicago Cubs catcher Michael Barrett slugged the Chicago White Sox catcher A.J. Pierzynski, unprovoked, callers on Chicago sports talk shows (overwhelmingly male) generally agreed that Barrett's gesture, "manly" by the Mansfield standard of "brute aggression," was a sign of weakness, not strength. They understood that he was cracking under the stress of a miserable season, and that a "real man" would (like Gary Cooper) avoid conflict unless it were inevitable.

Sure, we need upper-body strength, at least in some functions, though these are fewer today, even in the military. (Even Mansfield grants that women outdo men in endurance, another valued physical characteristic.) And sure, we need some of that old punch-'em-out aggression, though boys need to learn that some types are better and other types are worse. (Significantly, all Chicago White Sox fans, including this one, applauded rookie Brian Anderson when he ran out of the dugout and joined in the ensuing brawl, punching Barrett's teammate John Mabry and thus standing up for his own teammate—the very teammate who had made the six-foot-two, 215-pound rookie walk around in a female cheerleader's outfit, as a comic form of hazing.)

Above all, we need to follow Aristotle's lead and distinguish the sort of courage that stands up for a valuable goal from both upper-body strength and punch-'em-out aggression. That sort of courage, which was the only sort that Aristotle thought a true virtue, always

good no matter what the circumstance, requires the ability to reflect on what risks are worth running, on what goals are noble and what goals trivial or even base. It is because the Gary Cooper character exemplifies this sort of reflection, and not only because he is unafraid to face a villain, that he is deemed a hero; but one can have that sort of reflection and not have much in the way of physical strength. If we take Mansfield's candidate definition, "confidence in the face of risk," and ask which American presidents have exemplified this trait—when understood in Aristotle's way, meaning risks for ends that have been reasonably deemed to be important—who could be a better candidate than the other Roosevelt, who is mentioned only once in Mansfield's book?

Franklin Delano Roosevelt had that famous optimism that kept a nation together through the dark times of the Depression and then through global war. He stood up for people in situations that were risky in all sorts of ways (the danger of a socialist revolution, the dangers of countless deaths of innocent people, the dangers of Nazi Germany and imperial Japan). His ends can be plausibly seen as valuable and good. And yet he was hardly an icon of manliness in Mansfield's sense. He was reassuring more in the way that a good parent is reassuring than in the way that T.R. was (if he ever was) reassuring. Yes, he dissembled, making people think he could walk at least a little bit. So he did understand that the American public needed (and perhaps still needs) to see its president as manly in a more vulgar sense. But how many would have thought him a John Wayne, even then? There are some things to be said for T.R., but for Aristotelian manliness I'll take FDR any day.

NOW LET US COME BACK TO the gender question. If we ask whether the Aristotelian virtue of courage belongs more to men than to women, we will need to ask, first, what it is that makes people willing to take enormous risks for the sake of others. It is difficult to study that topic, but a beginning was made by Samuel P. Oliner and Pearl M. Oliner in their book *The Altruistic Personality*, a famous study of rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. With careful social science techniques, they identified a number of variables that might be highly correlated with those courageous acts,

and then they questioned rescuers to discover what traits they had. The two traits that they found most highly correlated with this sort of courage were what they call a "caring attitude" and a sense of "responsibility." The rescuers had all been brought up to think that people ought to care for one another, and that it was unacceptable to shirk responsibility for someone else's suffering if one could do something about it. That was why (the Oliners conclude) they stood up for strangers as they did, risking their lives in the process. Rescuers were, of course, both male and female. Their common bond was, however, a set of traits that, at least in terms of common gender stereotypes, are more "feminine" than "masculine." Kristin Monroe, working with the list of "righteous gentiles" from Yad Vashem, came to a similar conclusion in *The Heart of Altruism*.

If this is right, and if we want to produce young people who have the sort of courage that these rescuers embody, then we will want to be sure that boys and girls both grow up with the capacity for concern and care, and the ability to take responsibility for the situation of others—traits that seem to be sorely lacking in American society at present. It would have been nice to have a book on manliness that focused on this problem. Clearly ordinary people can become virtuous in the way that Aristotle recommends, and clearly neither gender has a monopoly on the virtue in question. The problem we have is that so many young people in our money- and fame-focused society do not get much experience taking care of anyone or anything, and are

all too lacking in a sense of responsibility, as has been clearly shown in Dan Kindlon's *Too Much of a Good Thing* and other recent social scientific research on American adolescents.

What might one do about this, if one thought it a problem? A mandatory program of national service might be one way to begin bootstrapping courage—or true "manliness"—even if the materialistic and competitive culture of our high schools has left character in a pretty bad way, and even if families are all too uneven in the values they communicate to their children. We could also try to make primary and secondary education settings in which children learn the importance of care and social responsibility—a goal that has been greatly set back, of late, by the constant harping on scientific and technological proficiency, so important for competition in the global market, and the relative neglect of history, the humanities, and the arts.

Such reasonable and decent goals will be greatly impeded, however, if we do not even get to the point of distinguishing Franklin Delano Roosevelt from Michael Barrett, or, worse still, if we encourage young people to believe that the latter is better than the former. Even die-hard Cubs fans know better. Harvey Mansfield does not utterly reject such goals (I think), but his cavalier way with logic, his lack of definitional clarity, his ideological enthusiasm, and his tendency to romanticize characters similar to Bonds and Barrett make his book, well, uncourageous, just when we badly need to think well about how better to cultivate true courage. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 4

highest-selling of the year, and the enormous demand necessitated a second printing of the supplement, bringing its print run to a total of 90,000 copies. It appeared at precisely the right moment: The Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe (known as the Bergson Group) was in the midst of a campaign of newspaper ads, public rallies, and lobbying Congress for U.S. intervention against the genocide. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Treasury Department staffers had uncovered shocking evidence that the State Department was obstructing rescue opportunities and suppressing Holocaust news. The

combination of publicity, protests, congressional pressure, and a potential scandal made it possible for Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. to persuade President Roosevelt to establish the War Refugee Board in 1944. The Board's efforts played a crucial role in the rescue of over 200,000 Jews.

Then, as now, TNR has distinguished itself by lending its powerful voice to an important humanitarian cause, even when it was not the most popular thing to do. It made a difference in 1943. Let us hope it does again.

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST High Ground

THE 2006 ACADEMIC YEAR IS now over, and the most important event of the year in this small but significant precinct of American life was surely the diktat of the seven-person Corporation of Harvard College that Larry Summers leave the presidency of the country's oldest university. More precisely, given the hands in which the university has been left, it was the year's most important disaster. I have every confidence that former President Derek Bok, a judicious and wise man, will be able to do the nettlesome caretaking job required of him during the next year, even if he has chosen as his dean of arts and sciences an oleaginous retread, Jeremy Knowles. But it is not he who will determine the institution's future.

THAT TASK WILL FALL TO THE AFOREMENTIONED Corporation, self-selecting ever since 1650. At its head is Jamie Houghton, nonexecutive chairman of Corning Inc., the company founded by his ancestors more than a century and a half ago. He certainly was enthusiastic about Summers's designation in 2001. But I suspect what impressed him were the raw particulars of Summers's résumé: at 28, Harvard's youngest tenured professor; a distinguished career as an academic economist; chief economist of the World Bank and then secretary of the Treasury. Houghton did not comprehend, I imagine, that Summers's surgical—and therefore subversive—intelligence, his uncommonly skillful mind, would inevitably conflict with the most entrenched and narrow-gauged interests in the university. Actually, that was originally why his arrival brought so much, well, yes, satisfaction to many in 02138 and its environs. Summers was not alone in his feeling that it was time for far-reaching change at the university.

WHEN NANNERL KEOHANE WAS ELECTED a fellow of Harvard College, she told some press flack that she was "enthusiastic about the prospect of working with President Summers." But it took her hardly more than a half-year of membership on the Corporation before she be-

gan to maneuver to put an end to Summers's presidency. But who is Nannerl Keohane? In the mean Cambridge game (if ever there was a Cambridge Diarist, this one is it) of electing people to "the academy of the overrated," Keohane will always win by a landslide. She is known as a scholar, but I am not sure why. She displays nothing resembling erudition about anything. The book to which she owes her reputation—I think it was her Ph.D. dissertation—was published 26 years ago. But she is a recognizable type in the academic cosmos: the professor who disguises mediocrity with status. She is not an intellectual; she is a dignitary. Keohane was president of Wellesley College and then went on to preside for a decade over Duke University.

I THOUGHT OF HER WHEN THE LATEST scandal hit Duke. The picture of the university from which Keohane departed barely two years ago is not a pretty one. The racial situation at Duke seems to border on the treacherous, and the unnervingly elevated status of athletes and athletics—in what is, after all, a school with high academic standing—is, to say the least, troubling. Those are not issues that Summers would evade. (In fact, he didn't.) But in her brand-new book, *Higher Ground*, a collection of pronouncements to high-minded audiences, she barely pauses over these matters, except to allude to them in one or two sentences as almost so obvious that they are not worth discussion. You can tell that this is a dignitary's book, by the way, because Keohane writes of herself in the plural: "In preparing this book, we have omitted . . ." She, or rather they, omitted more than she realized.

KEOHANE KNEW VERY WELL, I THINK, what was at stake in Summers's presidency. The struggle between Summers and a variety of politicized social scientists and working-class-hero humanists, with whom Keohane allied herself and dragged along some of her panicky corporation comrades, was a holding action—a desperate one reinforced by "progressive" politics (as in the ROTC controversy), by an anti-Israel and even

anti-Jewish animus (as in the divestment matter), and by a certain strain of academic feminism (as in the refusal even to discuss an uncomfortable thought). But even all this was finally not the heart of the matter. The Summers scandal was really about his intention to correct a cultural decline that his critics refuse even to recognize. Remember C.P. Snow's lecture about "The Two Cultures"? Well, in 1959, when he delivered it, undergraduates at least knew something of both cultures. Now they know neither *Middlemarch* nor genomes, neither the *Missa Solemnis* nor quarks. Summers's assault was on this unacceptable situation. But there are some for whom it is entirely acceptable. The ranks of these Summers detractors included those who simply sup off Harvard, while his supporters largely consisted of scholars who add luster to it. I note that in Keohane's book, she says nothing about science in the university and beyond.

SUZANNE PRESTON BLIER, A PROFESSOR of African art, told the Faculty of Arts and Sciences that she knew, absolutely knew, that the trouble caused by Summers was hurting fund-raising, according to *The Financial Times*. She had other sad monetary tales to tell. Frankly, she is out of her head. During commencement events last week—undergraduate, graduate, and reunions of every school and vintage—Summers received so many plaudits and standing ovations that he might have been forgiven for thinking that the coup had never taken place. As for money, my own impression of wealthy alumni who were once my students is that Summers made them more generous; and, as for the future, they will wait and see. I know of at least three gifts in the \$100 million range that were very likely to materialize and now are dicey.

THE MOST ASTUTE CONSTITUENCY AT Harvard, it turns out, is the cohort of undergraduates. They called him Larry from the beginning, a genuine sign of affection and a proper sign of esteem. The fact is that Summers spent more time with students than most professors, few of whom grade their students' papers or even know their names. Is he haughty? No. Ask the students who cheered whenever they encountered him. So who was intimidated by him? Only those who couldn't answer his questions.

MARTIN PERETZ

FROM THE NEW HOOVER STUDIES IN POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND SOCIETY SERIES

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Richard A. Posner is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago and a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School. He is the author of Remaking Domestic Intelligence.

Copublished with Rowman & Littlefield
2006, 256 pages, \$19.95 Cloth
ISBN: 0-7425-5127-X

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HOOVER INSTITUTION

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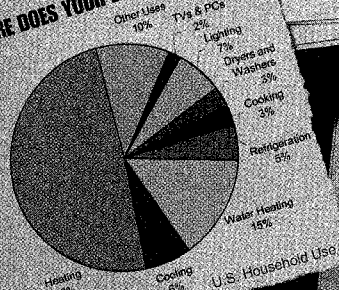
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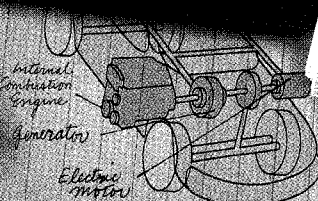
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